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THE MEANING OF GOD

BY

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PREFACE

"Religion," writes a recent reviewer, "to most of my acquaintances remains the synonym of the house of bondage. Once they outgrow the subordinations of youth, they spontaneously, joyfully, cast religion aside." If there is any truth in this comment, it represents a tragic misconception of the real nature of religion. For it is the very purpose of religion to offer men not restriction but release. It is the open door for the mind of man seeking a meaning for the world and life that will lift him above the hard order of physical nature. It is a release for the spirit of man seeking the vision and the power of a new and larger life. The message of religion has always meant "good news" for those who bore it.

Let us not too quickly conclude that those who wish to throw it aside are simply seeking to rid themselves of the demand which religion makes, the narrow door by which man's spirit must always enter into the larger life. However that may be, we do well to ask ourselves whether it may not also be true that the men

of our day do not understand religion for what it really is. Religion, which is freedom and life, tends constantly to lose itself in those forms which of necessity it must create when it seeks to express itself, its creeds and codes and ritual and organization. It is far easier for the mass of men to hold the form than to know the life, and the result is that the life may be lost in the forms which should serve to express it.

There is then a double task which rests upon every generation, and especially upon those of us who believe that in the weakness and distraction of this period the liberation and guidance of religion are the supreme need. First, we must further the life; religion itself must come to a new birth as the experience of the eternal here in time, of its power to liberate and its right to command. Second, we must reinterpret this life for the thought and needs of our day.

It is to this second task that the following chapters are dedicated. They aim to set forth the significance of religion by pointing out the meaning of God. Religion lives from the conviction that there is a world of spiritual reality in which the meaning of human life is to be found, and that world for us is summed up in the idea of God. What now does God mean for the life of the man of to-day? If religion is to abide in power, it is this which must first be made clear. If man feels no need of God, if God remains simply a topic in theology, an article in the creed, or a philosophic system, then the great mass of people will pass him by. It is God as the heart of a living faith that needs to be shown to men.

The writer then does not aim primarily to furnish a philosophy of religion; excellent philosophical expositions of the idea of God have been furnished in recent years by such men as Hocking, Pringle-Pattison, Sorley, Henry Jones, and Beckwith. Neither is the aim here to defend or expound traditional theology. The writer takes his stand frankly within the Christian faith, convinced that the meaning of the world and of life has come to men in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He seeks to make plain what such a faith means for the thought as well as the life of the man of to-day.

But while the aim is to set forth the meaning of the Christian conception, the attitude is not dogmatic nor the method merely to set forth traditional theological formulæ. No appeal to external authority will settle these matters for the man of to-day. At every step the attempt must be made to consider the world about us in the light of our best knowledge as it bears on this our faith, and then to ask what this faith means as we bring it to bear upon this our world.

The substance of this volume was presented as a series of lectures on the Quillian Foundation at Emory University. The writer wishes to express to the Faculty of the University his appreciation of the honor of the invitation to deliver these addresses as well as of many other courtesies shown to him in this connection.

While the order of discussion here followed seems to the writer the logical one, the reader less familiar with such inquiries may find it more interesting and

profitable to begin with the third chapter, taking the first two chapters last.

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL.

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THE MEANING OF GOD

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I

THE GOD WHO IS FAR

The debate about the meaning of religion is one that has gone on among scholars for many a year. It will go on for years to come, for we seem to be not much nearer to agreement than we have been in the past. The reason is not far to seek. Religion is not one thing in our human life to be marked off and studied; it is the inner side of everything. There is no part of human nature which does not come to expression in it; it is a matter of mind and heart and will. There is no part of human life which it does not lay hold of; inner and outer, individual and social, custom, duty, beauty, truth, it relates itself vitally to all. It takes different forms. It appears as creed and offers a philosophy of the world and life. It comes to us as ethics and seeks to direct all behavior. It creates organizations, churches, which include whole

peoples and live on from age to age. It takes form as culture, or mode of worship, with priests and prayers and hymns and sacraments and rites of every kind. And to different individuals and peoples and ages, different aspects of all this make their appeal.

Out of all this, however, two elements emerge. We might describe religion as an ellipse and say that its curve moves about these two foci. Indeed, we may say that at every point religion is determined by these two centers of interest.

The first of these is the needs of men. On that we are more and more agreed: religion roots in man's nature and his fundamental needs. It is not an idle curiosity looking out on the world and trying to find an explanation. It is not a fraud forced upon men for the profit of priests. It is not a matter of meaningless custom passed on from age to age. That is why religion remains in the midst of change. The codes and customs of religion vary from age to age.

Ritual, most tenacious of all, comes under the same rule—what church in all the earth has the same customs as did Paul's churches or that at Jerusalem? And as for creeds, one might say that their form changes most of all. But religion, banished by persecution, confuted by argument, defeated in its hopes, suffering not least from the disloyalty of its adherents or their mistaken zeal, has lived on, growing weak at times, yet coming again and again, in changed form it may be, to a greater rebirth. All this is possible only because religion rests upon something basic in man.

There are two fundamental urges of human life that all recognize: hunger and love. It is hunger that has forced man to toil, that has sharpened invention, driven to thought and study, led to coöperation with his fellows, compelled great migrations, and has been the mainspring of war down to our own day. It is love that has built families and communities, states and nations, that has made man willing to take up burdens which he would not assume for himself, that has been the fruitful soil of high ideals and noble sentiment. Without hunger the individual could not survive, without love the race would perish.

Is religion, then, a third instinct to be placed by the side of these? No, not if you think of it as an independent instinct. But we may put it by the side of these two and call it the third great hunger of our humankind. For there are these three sides to our human life. There is the physical which binds us to earth, the social that binds us to our fellows, and this third which takes in these others but goes beyond them.

It is man's quest for meanings and values, his relation to the whole world of the unseen. How they come we do not now ask, but here they are, these ideals and values. There is man's sense of the worth of his own life; it may be selfish at first, but at its best it takes in human personality as a whole. Here is his feeling for moral values, for what is right and just and good in his own life and in the group. Here is his sense of unity and order and purpose. All this may be suggested by the world in which he lives, but

it is very plain that he feels here not so much what is as what ought to be. The world that is, at least this world that he sees and handles, does not show him these things. There is no justice in rocks and trees, no love in the silent stars, no moral ends that appear in the storms and tides, no clear purpose in the passing years. And he himself with all his hopes and ideals and sense of human worth, what is there in nature that pays heed to him? What is he more thar a grain of sand on the shores of time compared with the infinite spaces in which there float a million million suns?

But religion is not constituted by the mere sense of man's needs or of the goods which he desires. Leaving the question aside as to how this may have arisen, there remains the fact of man's sense of a higher power which is inseparable from religion wherever this appears. God and man's need, these are the foci about which religion always moves, man's need and the answer in God. For that is what religious faith is; it is the conviction that there is something that answers to this need, something in which lies man's highest good, the meaning and end of his life and the help by which he may achieve it. Looked at from one aspect you may say that at every point as we plot the curve of religion we find the dominating idea of man's needs and the goods he desires. But it is equally true that at every point there is the determining thought of that higher reality which religion calls God. God is not one of our religious beliefs; he is *the* belief. He is not one doctrine; he is the

heart of all doctrine. Is there a Truth in which all partial truths find their place and meaning? That is God. Is there a Life from which all life comes? That is God. Is there a Righteousness in which all that is holy and just and right has its perfect being? Is there a Power on which our weakness depends, a Help that answers to our need? Is there a final Good in which all our goods have their being and their goal and their assurance of achievement? All that is in the meaning which religion sees in God.

Men may not believe in this God; they may pass him by, or search and not find him. But two facts are clear; one is the presence of this hunger in our humankind, the other is that when a man really finds God, this is the place that God fills. No one among the modern "seekers after God" has said this more effectively than H. G. Wells, writing in the war novel, "Mr. Britling Sees It Through," into which he put so much of his own experience. "Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honor. But all these things fall into place and life falls into place, only with God. Only with God." [1] But that is only repeating in a modern way what all the saints have seen and known. Augustine said it: "Thou hast made us onto thyself, and our soul is restless until it rests in thee." And the psalmist phrased it for us long ago:

[1] See the whole passage, "Mr. Britling Sees It Through," pages 438 ff.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that
I desire besides thee.

"My flesh and my heart faileth;
But God is the strength of my heart
And my portion forever."

The goods and ideals of the group will, of course, especially in the earlier stages, play the leading rôle here and in this day we have come to a clearer recognition of the place of social values in religion. But there is a curious blindness to what for men of religion has always been at the heart of their experience, when religion is simply equated with "the consciousness of the highest social values." [2] Orthodoxism, for which religion can be stated in terms of traditional and authoritative doctrine, rationalism (so much like orthodoxism in its one-sided intellectualism), for which religion is a philosophy discoverable by man's reason, and the moderns for whom religion is merely a social function or a social passion—these all alike miss this unique quality of religion. For religion is man's life as lived in relation to something higher than himself, a being upon whom he feels himself dependent, from whom he expects help, and to whom he recognizes his obligation.

In his significant book, "The Idea of the Holy," Rudolf Otto has given a searching analysis of religious experience, especially in its more primitive forms. Call it *mana* or *wakanda* or *orenda,* or call it, as Otto does the *numinous,* or simply *the holy* in the experi-

[2] Ames, "The Psychology of Religious Experience," page vii.

ence of religion man becomes aware of something higher than himself. It may come to him some night when the tempest reveals its overwhelming power and his own impotence. He may feel it in the mysterious presence of death or in the awe that is stirred by the glory of sunrise or the wonder of the stars. Loneliness and the sense of peril in strange surroundings may quicken it as with the fleeing Jacob, but in some way the soul of man awakes to a strange presence and cries out: "Surely God is in this place; and I knew it not." Awe, wonder, fear, fascination, a sense of dependence are all mingled here, and all are called forth by the growing feeling of man that he is in the presence of something that is more than himself or his fellows or the world of things about him, and that this higher power has a meaning for himself and his world.

This sense of a higher presence, moreover, abides as religion moves up into more ethical and spiritual forms. There are those who will dispute this. We do not reach the higher forms of religion, they will say, until we eliminate the supernatural reference. We must rationalize religion and ethicize it, they declare; we must set it forth in logical and demonstrable ideas and make it practical by reducing it to moral ideals and rules. Unfortunately when religion reaches this stage it tends to die out, losing not only its hold as religion but its moral power. But, indeed, they are mistaken as to the highest form of religion. The idea of the supernatural, of that which is above this natural world in power and beyond man's comprehension, of

that which has the right to command man's life and before which he bows in awe—this is not found merely among the primitive and superstitious, nor does it disappear when religion becomes ethical and rational. The world knew no higher religion before the coming of Jesus than that of the Hebrew prophets. It was a rational religion, one that appealed to the mind, calling men to worship not some blind and inscrutable power but a God whose character was revealed and whom men might know; and it was an ethical religion alike in its concept of God and its demand upon men. Yet the prophets have this same idea of a God high and lifted up, filling the hearts of men with reverence and awe. Where is there a truer picture of the soul of reverence bowed before the most High than in the story of Isaiah's call, or a more lofty vision of the God who moves with power and purpose in nature and history than that which is given us in the second Isaiah? It is not otherwise with Jesus. He does not hesitate to speak about fearing God. He bids us pray "Our Father," but we do not get the power and meaning of these words except as we sense their background in the words that follow, "who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." For these latter words bear all that thought of the God of infinite majesty and power, the holy God, before whom the soul of man is to be hushed in reverence and fear. And the literature of religion has no scene so searching, none so fitted to awaken awe and humility, as the picture of the praying Jesus in Gethsemane, the Son of Man with soul prostrate in the presence of the Eternal, in awe and

humble submission before that which seems to have been hidden even from him.

Our own age, in which we have been so busy harnessing up religion to everyday tasks, gives evidence of this feeling for the infinite and this hunger for the eternal. It may be seen in the revival of mysticism. It appears in a growing appreciation among students of the real nature of religion. The very religious aberrations of our day, Christian Science and theosophy and "new thought," and the rest, point the same way. And, at far remove from these, does not the strength of "fundamentalism" lie in this direction? Its method may be quite mistaken, with its insistence upon tradition, its external authority, its Biblical literalism, and its mechanical conception of the supernatural; yet it has made large numbers feel that it alone is preserving the supernatural, the essentially divine and eternal in religion. And what shall we say of the appeal of the Roman Catholic Church, whose crowding worshipers are surely impelled by something more than a fear that they may be excluded from a future world whose keys the Church holds? Has not this Church set itself definitely through its cultus to appeal to this sense of the supernatural? And in our Protestant Churches, with their traditional intellectualism, whether dogmatic or rational, and with their emphasis on the social and practical, is there not coming a deeper appreciation of worship, a worship with beauty and order and reverence and helpful surroundings, all as means to lead men into the presence of the divine?

So far we have spoken only in general terms of this idea of the far God. We have thought of it as the infinite, the eternal, as that which, however near to man, is yet above him and the whole world of finite things in power and meaning. We need now to define the term more closely. We will begin with a historical consideration, with the idea of holiness, and first of all as this appears in the Old Testament. So accustomed are we to the Christian idea of holiness that it is hard to get back to the original Old Testament meaning. In its primary sense there is nothing ethical in holiness, no reference to character; nor is its first meaning, as so often stated, that of separation, whether of God from his world, or of man from sin or ceremonial defilement. These are later ideas. Holiness belongs first of all to God. It is that which makes him God, his power and majesty, his contrast with all that is finite and perishable and weak. It is that which the nations must come to recognize. When in Ezekiel Jehovah says, "I will be hallowed" (that is, recognized as holy), he means that he will assert his power so that the nations that have oppressed Israel will recognize that he is really God. Holiness is that before which men are to bow in reverence and awe, as did Isaiah in the temple.

Such an idea could be easily abused. Men thought of the power as something strange and mysterious, something incalculable. It was like the electricity of the live wire, useful but needing to be handled with care, able to help but also to inflict great harm. This power was not necessarily thought of as joined to

character and purpose. It could be communicated to persons and objects, and then these needed to be handled with care. An Uzzah with the best of intentions might touch the ark and be killed, while the same ark brought great prosperity to Obed-edom simply by being lodged at his home. It is this primitive idea of the holy that has gone over, for example, into the Roman Catholic Church, where holiness is less a matter of the ethical than of such a strange mysterious quality or force that can belong to things quite as well as to persons. It was a conception that could give rise to all kinds of superstition. With the growth of insight the idea of the holy undergoes change. In fact, the transformation of the idea of the holy is the index of the development of religion. For the prophets the majesty of Jehovah and his power are not blind or strange or unknown in their meaning. Jehovah is more than a power before whom men are to bow in fear. "Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness." [3] The transcendence of God comes to be seen not in mere might, in dazzling splendor, but in his mercy and righteousness. The name of Jehovah is still "the Holy One of Israel," but it is in his spirit and character that he is holy, or lifted above men.[4] Christian thought is wonderfully expressed here when Paul speaks of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, not in the majesty of the stars or the power of the storm, but in the face of Jesus Christ. That which

[3] Hallowed means "seen as holy," Isaiah v. 16.
[4] Isaiah lv. 1-9.

now commands the worship of man, that before which he bows in deepest awe, is moral majesty. And yet it would be wholly wrong to suppose that the Christian thought of holiness becomes merely that of goodness. It is not simply goodness: it is goodness joined to power. We do not simply look up to God and say, "There is goodness, I should obey it." There remains still the sense of infinite power, of ways that we cannot fully comprehend, the sense of reverence and awe. Nor let us forget that Jesus himself, who taught us the word of simple trust, "Father," with which to approach God, used also the word "fear." [5] The heart of religion is reverence and awe.

Religion then, at its highest as well as lowest, roots in this thought of a Being that is above man. We turn now to the Christian thought of God and ask more specifically what this idea of the far God means in the Christian faith. It means first the God of creative and controlling power. God is the God of power. He is not simply one of many beings in this world that we know, a little stronger, it may be, than the rest. He is not simply an idea of beauty or goodness, in itself helpless to command or to aid its worshipers, like some Venus of Milo whose beauty men admire but who has no arms to lift her worshipers. There is

[5] Matthew x. 28. That is why religion is so different from magic. That is why I cannot but feel that writers like Frazer are wholly wrong when they make religion rise out of the failure of magic which drives men to the idea of gods who will help where other things have failed. Religion does not begin with the idea of gods as beings who can be used, however closely it may be allied with man's sense of need.

a striking Old Testament expression to which we may well go back for our thought; it speaks of Jehovah as "the living God." That does not mean "the being of God" about which we debate so much; that way lies philosophy. Religion demands far more; it must have not just a God who exists, but one who counts, a God who does things. That is "the living God." So Israel saw God in the storm that swept down from the hills, in the smiling harvest, in the defeat of their enemies; yes, and it was the triumph of the moral insight of the prophets that they saw God in the very victory of their foes and the reverses of Israel.

"Thou art the God that doest wonders;
Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples.
The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
Thy lightnings lightened the world:
The earth trembled and shook.
Thy way was in the sea,
And thy paths in the great waters.
Thou leddest thy people like a flock,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron." [6]

Nowhere is this more finely set forth than in Second Isaiah.[7] Here the pure religious instinct asserts its faith. Despite political reverses and national disasters and the overwhelming superiority of the foe, whether in miltiary power or in ancient "culture," the prophet proclaims the God who has created all things, who nightly leads forth the silent stars, who directs history, who sets kings upon their thrones to work his will even when they do not know him.

[6] Psalm lxxvii. 14, 18-20.
[7] Note especially Isaiah xl to xlv.

There are those who fear in the name of faith that modern science would change all this, and there are some who assume to speak for science and declare this to be a fact. The latter assert that science has shown that there is in this universe one energy, and one alone, fixed in amount, working by inevitable law, explaining all, determining all. Nature is a great Machine and we have no right to think that there is a Soul in it or a Power above it. There is no place here to confute this argument. It suffers from one fatal defect: it leaves out of account one whole world of reality, the world of personal-spiritual life; it leaves aside the forces which are mightiest in commanding and shaping the life of humanity—hope and fear and love and justice and brotherhood, and the whole conscious human life of impulse and interest and ideal. I do not minimize what modern science has really done in changing our view of the world. It has pushed back the boundaries of the universe beyond all our imagining, not only into the infinite astronomic spaces, but into those equal marvels of the infinitely small where the orbits of electrons are plotted like the orbits of the stars; and not only the boundaries of space, but those of time as well. Second, it has asserted the sway of law, the reign of order in all the universe. Third, it has shattered the old geocentric world, with all its meaning for man's thought of himself and his relation to the universe, and has made our earth a tiny fragment amid infinities. Finally, it has changed the old static system, in which all things had their final form and fixed place, into a

world where forces have taken the place of things, where all has come to its present state through endless eras of change, and where the same development is still taking place.

Undoubtedly these changes have affected deeply the forms of religious thinking; and, more than that, beginning with Copernicus, faith felt its foundations shaken too; for men are always inclined to identify their faith with the form in which it has been held and feel that religion is gone when some altar is moved or a phrase is changed in the creed. But in the end these changes have made it no whit harder for faith to find the living God in his world. Science to-day, no more than at any previous age, concerns itself with the final questions of life or can answer them—the question of the Power that moves in all forces, of the Life that is the source of all life, of the Mind whose thoughts are reflected in that order which we call law, and of the Meaning which works through it all to some final goal. Indeed, science is helping us to a truer and larger vision of God. How could it be otherwise, if it be true science, since its subject is the world of God? Faith saw long since that God's ways were those of wisdom and steadfast character; the faithfulness of God, in Old Testament phrase, means just this. What science means by law is just the order that belongs to such a dependable God; the correlate of the natural law of science is the character of God. Further, science has made impossible the old idea of an absentee God. Either we must find God in the ongoing processes, the ever-moving

forces of this world, or else we have put a blind energy on the throne and made God an impotent idea. Science has helped us regain the Old Testament idea of a living God. And so it has helped us to see that the creative work of God is an ever-renewed story and not an event of the past.

Christian faith sees this far God, this God that is more than this world, in the second place, not only as Power but as Purpose. The God of purpose is above the world, while still working in it. The world by itself, whether in nature or history, compels no such conclusion. There have been those, it is true, who have found in the world itself the plain evidence of purpose and progress which nature is working out. And this rather shallow optimism has in the last generation or so been wont to clothe itself in scientific form. Evolution, so its logic ran, is an established fact of science. Evolution means development, progress. That development is by natural forces and is inevitable. Evolution therefore will be for us science and religion both, and we need no God. Andrew Carnegie gives us a rather naïve expression of this in his Autobiography: "When I, along with three or four of my boon companions, was in this stage of doubt about theology. . . . I came fortunately upon Darwin's and Spencer's works. . . . Reaching the pages which explain how man has absorbed such mental foods as were favorable to him, retaining what was salutary, rejecting what was deleterious, I remember that light came as in a flood and all was clear. . . . I had found the truth of evolution. 'All is well

since all grows better,' became my motto, my true source of comfort. Man was not created with an instinct for his own degradation, but from the lower he had risen to the higher forms. Nor is there any conceivable end to his march to perfection." [8] It need hardly be said that all this is not science but philosophy. When the Great War came it showed what human nature, plus science and engineering and minus religion and ethics, could do. The philosophy of man's natural goodness and of inevitable progress in the universe broke down and Mr. Carnegie broke off the writing of his autobiography. Nature shows dysteleology as well as teleology; human nature shows degeneracy as well as progress. If nature is to be more than a mere mechanism and history more than a tangle of events or an endlessly repeated and unmeaning cycle, then we must believe in a God who is more than nature, in whom purpose and meaning have their reality. Without that we should be much more consistent if we took the gloomy view of Bertrand Russell and held that "man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the ends they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no force, no heroism, no intensity of thought or feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins." [9]

[8] Andrew Carnegie, "Autobiography," page 339.
[9] "Mysticism and Logic," page 47.

There is a third form in which this vision of a far God is held by Christianity and that is in the thought of absolute goodness. It is not power which a spiritual man worships. If the gods be only that arbitrary will which some theologians have set up, then we might well honor Prometheus in his defiance of them. But the heart of a spiritual religion lies in the conviction that power and goodness are one. That is the meaning of our first great confession, "Our Father, who art in heaven"; for by Father we mean goodness and by heaven the place of rule. God is for us the supreme and perfect goodness. We know something of Goodness here, but it is mingled with evil; it is at best only the good in the making. Above all the world's evil or imperfect good rises the goodness of God, the perfect holiness. This transcendent goodness means for us three things. It means a good and a right that are real and not a mere idea or dream. It means next a good that has a right to command, a righteousness which it is our highest life to obey. And it means, finally, a good that is to triumph. We do not fight for the good in a world of blind forces, nor yet with evil tipping the scales against us. Rather the stars are fighting in their courses against Sisera, the unseen forces are on the side of good. What Socrates said is true: "If the gods do not prefer the good man to the evil, then it is better to die than to live." If the foundations of the world are not laid in righteousness, if goodness be not the highest reality,

> "Then earth is rotten at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is." [10]

[10] Tennyson, "In Memoriam."

The God that is far means for us the reality and authority of righteous, and the foundation for all high hope of the future.

But here we come to a group of questions that have concerned Christian thinkers and others a good deal of late. This far God of whom you are speaking, is not that what philosophers mean by their Absolute? Are you not leading us away from religion into abstraction? Or are you not falling back into that outworn theology that pictured a God far removed and made of him an autocrat whose essence was sheer power and arbitrary will? What we need, say these voices, is a God that is linked in closest fashion to our human life. What we want is not a hard and fast system dominated by an all-controlling will. We want a world of action and life and growth, with place for human freedom and initiative and responsibility. Is it not a finite God that we want? So we have Mr. Wells with his Comrade God fighting with us against the blind forces of the Universe, and Mr. Dickinson with his "Religion of a Social Passion" whose God is apparently an idealized humanity, and Professor James with his pluralism that would seem to give room for a good many gods, and Samuel Butler, who will have no theologian's God sitting above the clouds, but whose God seems pretty much identical with the animal and vegetable world.[11]

Now some of this protest is certainly in place. Philosophy is interested commonly in the abstract, in some final substance, some world ground, some abso-

[11] "God the Known and the Unknown," pages 55, 67.

lute, in which is found the unity and the explanation of the whole. Religion on the contrary is concerned with personal relations and the value of the individual; in the words of Mr. Balfour, in "a God whom men can love, a God to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes, however conceived, leave unimpaired the possibility of a personal relation between himself and those whom he has created." [12] The formal definitions of the theologians, anxious to remove God from all limitation, full of assertions of abstract perfection, have resulted in something very far from the real concern of religion and the real experiences of life. Nor is it much better when a theologian like John Calvin pictures a God of arbitrary will, backed by irresistible power which carries his decrees into effect.

But when we have conceded all this, the fact remains that religion demands the absolute. For religion always centers in the highest; it is man seeking, with sure instinct, something before which he can bow and in which he can find the completion of life. In the highest sense, there is no religion until a man has found that which has the right to command his life and in which he can trust. But when a man has found this, then this is his absolute, this is his God. The good that can command men will be no partial, no relative good; it must be a goodness with absolute reality, a goodness fundamental to the universe itself. It is the good that is God for us. The power that we worship must be more than some being like our-

[12] "Theism and Humanism," page 36.

selves, struggling like Mr. Wells's Invisible King toward a goal that must ever be uncertain. It is not that we ask for sheer, irresistible power. It is no autocratic universe that we seek; but we do want to know that the goodness which is God commands the power that will lead at length to its goal.

This then, I take it, is the sense in which Christian faith demands an absolute God, whether we care to use that term or not: a God who is the source of all life and being, upon whom all things are dependent, who himself is not dependent for being upon aught outside himself, whose reason moving in all makes one ordered universe, whose goodness is perfect and has the right as such to command, and who has the resources to carry this world, through whatever sacrifice and toil may be needed, to a final goal of good.

At least a brief reference should be made to the idea of God as above human knowledge. There is an essential element of agnosticism in the Christian faith, and the great spokesmen of the Bible bear witness to it. God is always for us both revealed and hidden. So he appears in the lofty lines of Job, where faith holds to God yet realizes his hidden ways. Paul is sure that men may know the character of God in Jesus Christ, yet he cries out: "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" It is Martineau who writes: "It is the essence and beginning of religion to feel that all our belief and speech respecting God is untrue, yet infinitely truer than any nonbelief and silence."

And John Owen gives the reason for this: "We know so little of God because it is God who is thus to be known." [13] Augustine's phrase has too often been forgotten by the dogmatists when he declares that he uses the term "persons" in connection with the Trinity, not because he would say this, but that he might not keep silent. These great teachers are all of them sure of God, sure that he has turned his face upon them, that they know him, that they can trust him utterly, that their life is to be found only in absolute devotion to him; yet at the same time they have the keenest sense of the infinitude of being in God that is beyond their knowledge.

It remains for us to note briefly the meaning which this conception of the God that is far, or the transcendent God, has for religion. By the far God we mean the God who is not only in man, but who is more than man, who is above us in power, who is absolute in goodness, from whom is the order and unity that obtain in the universe, in whom is the purpose that gives meaning to all. What does this signify for religious faith?

Here is, first of all, moral transcendence and moral authority. The good is not our dream, it is really existent. The object of our aspiration is not an imperfect and idealized *we*, but a perfect *Thou*. Our loyalty is not simply to our group, or even to a total humanity as such, but to that humanity as seen in the good purpose of this God. The breakdown of moral sanc-

[13] The two quotations are taken from a suggestive passage by H. G. Wood, "Living Issues of Religious Thought," pages 21, 22.

tions in our day makes clearer than ever how deeply we need the conviction that there is a right and good which is more than social convention or individual preference, that it is grounded in the very foundations of the world order, and that it speaks with authority. It is not that we do not have to search for this good which we must obey, not that our experience must not help point the way, not that it comes to us as external authority, but that, however it comes, once here we know that it is more than we and that it has the right to command our life.

There is, in the second place, the conviction that this transcendent goodness is also transcendent power. Of itself, the mere thought of supreme power does not evoke religion in man, any more than does Schleiermacher's absolute feeling of dependence. There is, indeed, a thought of the infinite or even of sheer power which brings to man a crushing sense of insignificance and impotence, which casts down instead of lifting up. So modern astronomy may well terrorize the imagination of man who is thus reduced to nothingness. That was Carlyle's thought when his friend exclaimed over the glory of the heavens on a clear, starry night and the dour old sage replied, "Man, it is just terrible." The infinite spaces of the skies or the blind fury of the sea with its irresistible power may well awaken such a feeling. But there is a power that lifts up as well as casts down; it is the power to which a man prays and which he can trust. When a man has found this, then he has found his God. Then power has a face that man can read and a heart

that man can trust. Then power becomes liberation, not oppression, and man rejoices in it as that which makes him strong in confidence, which brings him courage as it brings him peace. Bishop F. J. McConnell tells of a Scotch regiment that he addressed one night during the World War just before they were to move up to the front line trenches, and how, when he asked them to sing at the close, the voices that came from here and there all called for the same hymn:

> "O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come."

The great hymns and psalms which have lifted the hearts of men in worship have been those in which men rejoiced in a majesty which they could worship and a power they could trust. Here is the reason for worship and joy:

> "For the Lord is a great God.
> And a great King above all gods.
> In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
> The strength of the hills is his also.
> The sea is his, and he made it;
> And his hands formed the dry land."

Not so clearly, and yet of the same spirit and the same source, is the reverent confidence that breathes through John Burroughs's poem, "My Own":

> "Serene I fold my arms and wait,
> Nor care for wind or tide or sea;
> I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
> For lo! my own shall come to me.

"I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face."

Here is the same sense of an order and a power above man which mean for him life and peace.

Burroughs's poem suggests the last consideration in the matter of the meaning and value of this conception, and that is the assurance of the final achievement of the good. We shall consider later the tragic fact of evil in the world. That fact of itself, however, is not destructive of faith so long as man is convinced that the issue is certain. But the fight for the good, and the loyalty to the right and true, will not last long where men lack the assurance that the good and right form the power that rules this world. Moral faith demands religious faith; without such religious faith it has never been able to maintain itself in strength and permanence among men. What man needs is the assurance that the high ideals that command his life, the hopes that stir him as he thinks of the future of mankind, are more than his dreams, that they are the expression of the will that rules the world. It is this truth which appears, however imperfectly, in the old doctrine of election and in the apocalyptic hope of early Christianity, and the truth has permanent place both for individual assurance and for social faith to-day. The form has changed, but the Christian man, with all his stress upon freedom and initiative and responsibility, still faces the future unafraid because the world order is on the side of the angels and there

is something more than his own strength. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

NOTE

The foregoing discussion has sought to consider the idea of God constantly from the point of view of its place in religion, and not as a dogmatic concept. It stands in very definite disagreement with the conception of religion typically voiced by E. S. Ames in his "Psychology of Religious Experience." There is no reason why Professor Ames should not set forth his personal faith as he has done in "The New Orthodoxy." There, we are told, God is to be found in the associated life of men, that he is, in fact, nothing more than this associated life as idealized and personified. He is compared to the individuality of a college class to which each member shows loyalty and reverence. So God apparently is the vague idea for Professor Ames, wavering between the composite life of humanity as it is and the ideal that humanity holds before itself. This is understandable, though one wonders as to the justification of the use of the word "God" by Professor Ames in a sense so different from what readers share or congregations at worship assume when it is used.

But there is a major criticism which is to be raised against Professor Ames and all those for whom religion is to be understood simply in its social function, for whom God is an idea that is to be "utilized," a convenient rallying point for our ideals and emotions, but not a being of objective reality apart from the life of the worshiper or his group. The criticism is that these men are not describing what religion really is. The dogmatist has gotten the better of the scientist, the effort at description has passed over into the defense of a norm, and the effort at descriptive psychology is vitiated by this unconsciously operative interest. We can sympathize when Professor Ames says, "The highest type of religion to-day is that which has the finest devotion to the most adequate ideal of life," or when he sums up religion as involving, "Reverence for life and for the moral distinctions which commend themselves to the experience of the

race; love for our fellowmen . . .; and the forward-moving action of life in the quest for better things than have yet been achieved." [14]

But over against this, two facts need plainly to be stated. First, if you are trying to describe religion as it is or as it has been through long ages, you are leaving vast ranges of religious life out of account, and it is quite unjustifiable to say flatly: "These then are the attitudes of the religious life." [15] Further, religion at its highest includes more than what is here given. It involves something that we call God, and a God who is more than our human life first idealized and then personified. It is of the very breath of the life of religion to believe that this which it worships is, that it has power, in the end that it has some absolute place in the world. Without this, religion might live on with a few of the poetically or ideally minded; it would die in the hearts of the multitudes whose God must mean reality and authority and help.

Two quotations may be added which seem to the writer to reflect more truly the nature of primitive and of developed religion at this point. "The quality of holiness and of absolute obligation are the surest mark of genuine religion from the beginning throughout history." [16] "It is in the long run impossible for religion to remain contented, as the æsthetic consciousness can, with an object which is merely its object, without placing it, so to say, in the center of things, and relating to it everything in itself and in its environment." [17] In the higher forms of religion there is involved here, as Webb goes on to suggest, a definite *Weltanschauung,* but at every stage religion involves not only values and interests, but an objective reference, the thought of some Being with power, with meaning for life by way of help and command.

[14] "The New Orthodoxy," pages 95, 27, 28.

[15] *Ibid.,* page 27.

[16] Söderblom, "Natuerliche Theologie und allgemeine Religionsgeschichte," S. 62.

[17] C. C. J. Webb, quoted in "Foundations," page 426.

II

THE GOD WHO IS NEAR

RELIGION moves in paradoxes; it is no wonder then that we find something of paradox in its central idea, that of God. And the paradox is this, that for religion God must be at once that which is far and that which is near. Until a man has found that which is above him, there can be no reverence, no trust, no devotion, and so no religion. But so long as this Being remains simply a Being above him, religion will be equally wanting; for religion lives only as man believes that this higher Being somehow draws near, that somehow he touches man's life, has some meaning for him, bears upon his destiny.

The great teachers of religion have known how to unite these contrasted conceptions in the unity of their faith. The prophet sees "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," [1] but he does not leave the temple till this same Lord draws near to cleanse his lips and bring his commission. Jehovah is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," who dwells "in the high and holy place"; but in the same breath we are told that he dwells "with

[1] Isaiah vi. 1.

him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." [2] A whole volume could not enforce the thought of the nearness of God more than the one word "Father" with which Jesus opposes alike the weak faith of men and the distance to which Judaism often removed God in its thought; yet he bids us pray to this God as the one who is in heaven and whose name is to be made holy.

Such paradox, which is the very life of religion, seems intolerable however to theology and philosophy, and so the tendency has always been to isolate one of these elements and carry it out to its conclusion. In traditional theology it is the farness of God which has received this emphasis—that is, the idea of God as transcending humanity. Its most common form in popular thought has been Calvinism. Here we have the supremacy of power, God as absolute sovereign. The final word for faith is not the glory of God as revealed in the character of Jesus, but "the omnipotence of God, by which, according to his secret counsel on which everything depends, he rules over all." When the mind calls for light or the affronted moral sense rises in revolt, there is no answer except that of decrees and decisions that rest upon "the mere pleasure of the divine will." "Everything which he wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of his willing it." [3] The other form which has been taken in theology by this one-sided emphasis on the transcendence of God has been an abstract idea of perfection. Here the

[2] Isaiah lvii. 15.

[3] Calvin, "Institutes," Book III, chapter xxiii.

supreme concern has been to lift God above every condition, every limitation, every likeness to the human or finite. Instead of a living God touching human life, we have the long list of attributes, omnipotence and omnipresence and omniscience and the rest, an analysis of which will show that they are at bottom really negations, denials of limitation.

> "Whatever you say, I tell you flat,
> God is not that."

In both these cases you have a beautiful logical system, but at the expense of religion itself. The God of sheer sovereign power leaves no room for moral freedom and responsibility, and makes goodness second to might. The God of abstract perfection is a philosophical idea rather than the object of a living faith. It endangers what is the very life of religion, the thought of personal relation. It lifts up an absolute substance or idea, where man wants personal fellowship. It is the influence of Greek philosophy still persistent in Christian theology, and its God as an absolute idea demands a static world. Christianity moves in the line of Hebrew thought and interest; its God is high and lifted up, but he is a living God who moves in his world and his world is one in which high purposes are being carried out.

It is true that the one-sided emphasis on the nearness of God is just as inimical to the interests of religion. Some of its representatives must be considered more in detail later on. There is the pantheist for whom God is not only present in his world, but

merged with his world, so that the world and God are one. There is the man who, like Mr. Wells, must have a finite God if he is to save his faith in a good God in the presence of the world's evil. There is the humanist, who identifies God with humanity and finds in an idealized humanity the object of devotion and the ground of hope. But here too it is religion that suffers, the religion that must have for reverence a higher good than it finds in itself and that must have as object of trust a power that can fulfill its hopes and aims.

If there is paradox in this double demand for a God that is far and one that is near, then that is because life itself shows this paradox, a certain tension, a conflict of interests and ideas which may find some ultimate unity, but in which the central meaning of our present life is found. Such are the ideas of dependence and freedom; on the one hand the sense of a whole, a higher something that shuts us in and determines us on every side, on the other the sense of freedom, of independence, and of consequent responsibility. Such is the seeming conflict of the individual and the social: the feeling that our own life is sacred, that the expression of self and its achievement must be our end, yet at the same time the realization that our life must ever be faulty and imperfect except as we relate ourselves in being and devotion to the social whole. In the words of Josiah Royce, "Every man who learns what the true goal of life is, must live this twofold existence—as separate individual, yet also as member of a spiritual com-

munity which, if loyal, he loves, and in which, in so far as he is loyal, he knows that his only true life is hidden and is lived." [4]

The questions of deepest interest to faith come to the front when we consider the near God. For the question of the near God involves just this: What difference does religion really make? What does God mean for my life and the world's? Where does he really touch it? Religion does not live from the thought of a distant Power, or an abstract Idea; it lives through this thought of a near God who makes a difference, who is really related to this world of human experience and daily happening. And if modern theology differs from traditional theology at any one point more than another, it is here. Traditional theology begins with a system of abstract ideas, a perfect and ordered realm of doctrine existing by itself; present-day theology begins with the concrete, with that which is near, with the world of religious experience and need, and seeks to find God and know God in and through this world. Just as much as ever it demands the Eternal, it cries out for God; but it wants a God related to life and it will know this God in and through his world. It has been criticized for its "anthropocentric theology," [5] for its humanism and naturalism, and there is some ground for this; but as a matter of fact, on the whole its interest is more truly and constantly religious than is the older orthodoxism which was often quite as abstract and intel-

[4] "The Problem of Christianity," I, 203.
[5] Schaeder, "Theozentrische Theologie."

lectualistic as the old rationalism which it fought. We want a God that makes a difference.

Our first task then in our study of the near God is to find the divine in the human, the eternal here in the world of time, to show that the far God of our faith is the near God in our world, to bring men to a knowledge of "the beyond that is within." But we cannot do this without facing another problem. As long as the theologian remains in the skies his task is fairly simple. He works out his system of ideas at will and there is no one to say him nay, for there is nothing by which to check his conclusions. It is quite different when we think of God as near and relate him to his world. For now we are entering a realm which is shared by others, and in which we must relate our faith to concrete facts. Natural science is here, and history and psychology and the plain facts of human experience. How fares now this idea of a God that is all-good and all-powerful in face of the evil and irrational in the world? Can we think of providence and the reign of natural law at the same time? Can we reconcile our faith in "one increasing purpose" with that seeming tangle of unmeaning events which we call history? When men say sight, can we say faith? When science says energy, can we say spirit? When it says law, can we say providence? Can we see the supernatural when it describes the natural? Can we say creation when it says evolution? When it says nature, can we see God?

We enter the realm here of the "conflict of science

and religion," and we know that so long as science and religion are studying and interpreting the selfsame world some conflict will be almost inevitable. That there should be ultimate conflict is impossible. For truth is one, and where truth is found there we find God, whether at the hand of science in the world of nature or at the hand of faith in the world of spirit. It is important too that we remember the distinctly different tasks which science and religion set themselves. Science is descriptive of modes of behavior in the world of nature. It has no answer for the questions "whence the mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, and what may or may not be beyond and beside it, which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not 'explained' by science and never can be." [6] It is just these questions for which faith seeks an answer. In case of "conflict" the fault has sometimes lain with the theologian. He has often assumed that faith stood or fell with the particular form of doctrine in which he expressed it. If the facts of science and history contradict some form of Biblical statement, then he concludes hastily that revelation is denied and religion is gone. If the statements of biologist and anthropologist and astronomer do not square with the pictures of Genesis, then the whole idea of creation is in peril. If science declares that the human race has come to be by gradual development, then he feels that the unique nature of man as moral personality is done away; strangely

[6] Sir E. Ray Lankester, quoted by Thomson, "Science and Religion," page 207.

enough that idea never occurs to him in the case of the individual, though he knows that every individual is a gradual development from an infinitely small germ. Undoubtedly one of the most fruitful sources of trouble here is a mechanical conception of inspiration, insisting upon verbal infallibility and mistaking the nature of revelation. Sometimes the scientist has been at fault. It was a temptation to assume that his world was the only world and his method the only method of reaching truth. The temptation to philosophize and dogmatize is upon us all, and not least upon those who are loudest in decrying philosophers.

It is by no means all loss here, however. Science has helped theology. For the spirit of science means humility and patience and teachableness. It asks of men a reverence for truth and a devotion to it. It recalls men constantly to the world of fact, to the realities by which our theories must be tested. How it has helped to correct old misconceptions and to lead to a truer understanding of God's way with his world will appear in our further study.

We begin with the thought of the nearness of God in the world of nature, and first of all as the creative God. The older doctrine of creation had little relation to the idea of the near God. Through a few successive steps, requiring in all but six days of time, God by a fiat of will brings forth the universe. His work is like that of a builder, working from without and shaping forth his objects one after the other. Now the question involved here is something far more than the order of appearances in Genesis and geology,

or the matter of whether we are dealing with six days or six epochs. It is not, of course, a matter of creation versus evolution. For whether the world sprang into being at some word of power, or came by long processes of development, the question would still remain as to its source, and the answer of faith would still be, "In the beginning God created." It is the question of how this creative Power has worked, and back of that the question of the nature of the universe itself.

The old idea of the world was static, a finished world, ordered and fixed and final. For physics there were fixed, ultimate particles, the atoms, of which all things were made. For chemistry there was a definite set of elements, themselves unchanging, however they might combine. In the world of life there was a similar order of species and genera that had been from all time. The same idea held in the social realm with the fixed institutions of family and state and property, and the fixed and unchanging social classes, higher and lower, into which men fell. Creation was thought of as the deed by which once for all this world was brought forth. That is behind us to-day. Science has given us a dynamic and developing world. We interpret reality in terms of energy. Activity is being and the mode of action is the revelation of the nature of a given being. The world that is has come to be through a long history of change, and change has not ceased with our day.

Now the first thought of many was that with this idea of a developing world the Christian conception of

creation went by the board. That was true of some who welcomed it and some who feared it. Let us turn again to this idea of evolution. No idea of modern times has had a wider influence, or has been more stimulating in all departments of thought, than the idea of evolution, and no other has been so vague, or so mutually contradictory in its different forms. What does evolution mean? Is it a process of unfolding by which that is brought to light which had previously existed though hidden, or is it the actual coming into being of something really new? Is it a purely mechanical process where all changes are wrought by forces working from without, or is it the movement of some life force that is continually giving birth to new forms of being? Is it mere change without idea or hope of progress, or is there purpose and meaning working to some high end? If we leave aside particular theories, like the Darwinian theory of organic evolution, then the general idea of evolution may be stated thus: That which is has come to be by gradual change in a continuous process through the orderly working of indwelling forces. And this might be further reduced to the two principles, continuity and change; that which is involves the appearance of something new, but the new always stands in relation to the old. All this leaves as many problems as it solves. There is no "explanation" here. Take the problem of the new. Where does it come from? The idea that slight changes may be assumed without any ground, or may be gotten rid of with the phrase "chance variation," is more naïve than

convincing, and "chance" or "fortuitous" does not fit very well into a discussion where everything is to be scientific. And the assumption that the high is not really higher, and not really different, because it all "developed" from the low, is just a bit of dogmatism. Continuity does not mean identity: it means simply that when the new appears it is related to the old. The new that comes little by little is just as big a problem in principle as if a world leaped forth complete at one stroke.

The idea then of a dynamic and developing world does not for a moment remove the ground for the thought of a creative God, but it certainly gives a different form to that conception. First of all we see creation as the work of an indwelling God. We think of the world no longer in terms of inert things that are being made and shaped, but rather in terms of energy and life, an energy that appears in changing forms, a life that becomes ever richer and more varied as it moves to higher planes. The process by which these changes take place is for the scientist as for the man of faith an orderly one. The former sums them up in terms of natural law; the latter sees in them the work of God and knows that all this energy and life is the moving Spirit of God. These are but two sides of the same reality:

> "A fire mist and a planet—
> A crystal and a cell—
> A jellyfish and a saurian,
> And caves where the cavemen dwell;
> Then a sense of law and beauty,
> And a face turned from the clod—

Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God." [7]

In the second place we see creation as a continuous process. The method of God is that of growth, or development. We see the same process in the shaping of the material universe, the growth of a tree, the making of human character, the bringing in of that new life of humanity which we call the kingdom of God. In the creative work on these different levels, different forces are brought into play. With the coming of personal life on earth God brings to bear the forces of truth and love, the transforming powers of personal fellowship. But it is still a method of growth. The new is constantly appearing, not the less wonderful because each morning becomes a fresh day of creation; but the new is always related to the old that went before. But, says some one, must we not in the name of religion demand that there be at least one place where a definite break occurred in this gradual development, the place where there appears at last man, moral, spiritual, in the image of God? Was there not something new and different when man came? Certainly there was something new and different when man appeared, and we must say, as our fathers did, that here is a being made in the image of God into whom God had breathed the breath of life. We may recall too the opinion of certain biologists concerning the sudden appearance of marked variations, or mutations, which initiate new and permanent forms of life. Only let us keep in mind two

[7] W. H. Carruth, "Each in His Own Tongue."

other considerations: first, not here alone but at every stage God is bringing new life to his world; second, at this stage as at all others the new is related to what went before and conditioned by it. Why be disturbed because man comes thus as the goal of a long process, or because we cannot define and date a dramatic moment and say, Here the new life appeared? Does not the life of each individual man present the same problem? Just a few years ago there was an infinitesimal germ. Step by step it grew. No moment was greatly different from what went before. At no time could you say, This is the great moment, here is a moral personality in the likeness of God. And yet the fact remains, the man is here.

Certainly this idea of creation is far more vital and involves an even loftier conception of God. He is no longer the distant God who, from his place removed, creates worlds and sends them spinning through space; he is indwelling spirit whose life moves in all. Nor is creation the easy fiat of sheer power that works without cost to itself. The great Spirit lives with men, fills his world, gives himself to it in ever-increasing measure, bringing forth out of himself its wonderful life of order and beauty and meaning, until at last he brings forth man to whom he gives in the fellowship of love and truth that measure of his life which no lesser being can share.

The relation of this indwelling God to the world of nature has been sufficiently indicated in the foregoing discussion. It is one of the points at which modern science has been of help to us. For modern

science has compelled us to think of this universe not in terms of fixed forms and dead matter, which a carpenter God might have made and set apart from himself, but in terms of energy and life. In such a world, God becomes either the power that moves in all and sustains all, or he is pushed out of the universe as a helpless and useless figure. There is something greatly appealing in such a conception as this. Wordsworth gives evidence of its meaning to the poet as he writes,

> "Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things." [8]

But this conception by itself is very vague and is far from reaching the Christian position. This may be pantheism, identifying God with the world-all. It may reduce itself to the idea of a Life Force, coming perhaps to a transitory consciousness in man. It may mean a pure naturalism, where the energy is never more than impersonal and its action always mechanical. Is this immanent Force spiritual or mechanical? Is it personal or impersonal? Is it ethical? Does it give reality to individual being and any place for freedom? It must be definitely realized that the dynamic conception of the universe and the philosophic or poetic conception of immanence are far from giving us the full

[8] "Lines Above Tintern Abbey."

Christian meaning of the God that is near. Something more is needed than to declare that "God is immanent so far as he is the pervasive principle or energy by which the creative process is carried forward." [9] The nearness for which the Christian conception of God distinctly stands is a nearness that is personal, ethical, and redemptive.

God is the personal being of love and good-will who draws near to men for their help; this is the distinctively religious as against the more philosophical conception of immanence. This is the higher immanence, the immanence which is possible only in the realm of personal being.[10] God as sustaining energy can dwell in all being, lowest and highest; but the nearness of personal fellowship is possible only with persons. There is a physical nearness, as we all know, where bodies may touch each other and souls may still be worlds apart. It is not enough for the Christian man to believe in a God who has beset him behind and before and laid his hand upon him, nor yet in a God in whom he lives and moves and has his being. In a measure that is true of the air that we breathe; but the heart of man cries out for a living God, for a God who knows and cares and draws near with a purpose of love, a God to whom a man may lift his face and say, "Our Father."

Only on this level can we see the higher creative work of God, the work that we usually call redemption. Here again is something more than shaping and

[9] Beckwith, "The Idea of God," page 269.
[10] See McConnell, "The Diviner Immanence."

sustaining energy; here is Person drawing near to person, here are goodness and righteousness calling for answering trust and obedience, here is love that asks for love in turn. Whether we emphasize the more negative side and call this redemption, or the more positive aspect and name it creation, here is a work that can be done only on this plane of the higher and personal nearness. And here one sees the weakness of so many modern cults from Christian Science to the varying forms of "New Thought"; with all their emphasis on the reality of the spiritual and its nearness, they miss the clear apprehension of this higher nearness that is personal and ethical. And the correlate of this failure is the equal failure to appreciate sin as the wrong personal and moral attitude on man's part which can block the work of the God who thus draws near. Here we get the larger meaning of the Incarnation of God in Christ, not as some single irruption of the divine into our humanity, but as the supreme deed of that God who ever dwells with men as Jesus did, hating the evil and loving the good, toiling with us and for us, calling us into that fellowship which is life's greatest creative spiritual force, suffering with us and for us. Here belongs also the Christian conception of God as indwelling Spirit, who enters into human life by way of this fellowship as the new and true life of man. But these aspects we must consider more in detail in the study of the democracy of God, and of God as Spirit.

We have seen that the Christian conception of the far God involves the idea of a God of moral

transcendence, the righteous and holy God before whom men bow in worship. The moral character of God is equally involved in this thought of the God who is near. The burden of the New Testament is clear; we know God as the good God because he draws near in mercy to save. God, says Jesus, is like the shepherd looking for his sheep, like the father going out to meet the wayward son. "God was in Christ," says Paul, in a summary of his gospel, "reconciling the world unto himself." [11] And the Old Testament in the same way finds the character of God revealed in the goodness with which he chose Israel and led her and blessed her; "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." [12] The character of loving good will is the necessary condition of such a fellowship, of this nearness of God and man. In the end it is love alone which can overcome that "salt, unplumbed, estranging sea" which divides person from person, love which gives itself to the other, love which finds its life in the other, love which evokes love from the other.[13] "Nowhere is there a fuller consciousness of the Personality and of the distinction from one another of the persons concerned than there is in love. Yet just here, in proportion to the greatness and the depth of the love, such mutual exclusiveness is transcended and done away." [14]

[11] 2 Corinthians v. 19.
[12] Hosea xi. 1.
[13] D'Arcy, "God and the Struggle for Existence," page 45.
[14] Webb, "God and Personality," page 148.

It is from this side, that of the nearness of God in fellowship and good will, that we have the religious approach to the idea of the personality of God. True, the conception of personality is also involved in the idea of the far God; God is not merely in his world, he is always more than his world, above his world. But it is in the thought of a God who thus draws near, as we have just seen, that the conception of God as personal is most clearly involved. And it is important that this demand of religion be clearly seen and be distinguished from philosophical considerations. Professor Pratt points out that there is in all religion a "social attitude" of the worshiper toward the object of his worship.[15] Certainly that is true of Christianity, and the social attitude involves clearly the thought of God as one so like ourselves that we may have fellowship with him. God's attitude is social, and not merely our own. He draws near with conscious purpose, with good will, and asks a personal response from us.

It is not terms with which we are concerned here, it is not necessary for us to use the word "person"; but the matter involved is for us of vital import. What we are concerned with, as C. C. J. Webb has pointed out, is "the capacity of finite persons for what can only be called a personal relation to the Supreme Reality—and therefore the presence in the Supreme Reality of whatever is necessary for the existence of such a relation thereto." [16] There is no special per-

[15] Pratt, "The Religious Consciousness," pages 2, 3.
[16] "God and Personality," pages 128, 129.

tinence in pointing out, as Mr. Webb does elsewhere,[17] that the term "person" was first used in theology, not for God but for inner-trinitarian distinctions, or in suggesting, as Kirsopp Lake does, that we search the Hebrew and Greek of Biblical times in vain for this term. There is little use in haggling over terms when there is so clearly present in the religion of the Old as of the New Testament that which religion demands, —namely, a conscious, purposive God of good will between whom and man a mutual fellowship is possible. What we are concerned with is not what Augustine had in mind in using *tres personæ* for the Trinity. That the substance can be present without the term is indicated by what Harnack says: "So strongly was Augustine filled with the feeling, never of course clearly formulated, that God was person, whom one was to trust and love, that this certainty was even a hidden guide for his trinitarian speculations." [18]

It does not lie in the scope of this discussion to consider the philosophical objections to the idea of God as personal being. They rest largely upon the idea that divine personality necessarily involves the limitedness and separateness that we have in human persons. The significance of this idea for our social faith can only be suggested, and yet it is absolutely fundamental. Back of the social struggles of to-day are two opposed world views. For one the supreme value lies in things, and the supreme rule is, Let him seize who can. For the other the supreme value lies

[17] "God and Personality," pages 61, 62.
[18] *Dogmengeschichte,* III, 109, 110.

in persons, and the supreme rule is that of a loving service which will further this personal, or human, life. The form which this opposition takes in the social questions of to-day needs no illustration, but we should make clear to ourselves what the opposed philosophies, or faiths, are which underlie this social conflict. Plainly those who stand for social justice, for democracy, for humanity, cannot permanently maintain their position except as it rests back upon the conviction that the universe is organized on their side, that the World Ground is personal and moral, that there is a personal God.

Many voices in our day are giving moving expression to this thought of the God that is near to men. Not least among these is the Indian poet and mystic, Rabindranath Tagore, one of whose poems may furnish a close for this discussion. The closing lines suggest the theme of our next chapter:

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

"Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all forever.

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"Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow." [19]

NOTES

The idea of development is, of course, a very ancient one. The difference which modern science has made is in the attempt to describe the laws and define the order by which this development takes place, in some instances to reduce it to a mechanical process. For Augustine creation was not the production at once of all the completed forms of life, but the bringing forth of a world in which all the potencies of this higher life were present, these to appear then through the ages. He suggests to us Tyndall's famous phrase, "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life." Note his "Fragments of Science," II, 191. So also Darwin, when he speaks of "life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one." See the closing words of his "Origin of Species." Augustine's view is apparently approved by Thomas Aquinas. See Simpson, "The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature," pages 382, 383, for quotations from both. Very striking are certain passages in the notable "Outline of Science" which John Wesley prepared for his day and published under the title, "A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation." It appeared in many editions, the following quotations being from the Philadelphia edition of 1816, volume II. Mr. Wesley writes that the universe is "no less one in succession than in coördination" (page 188). "There is a prodigious number of continued links between the most perfect man and the ape" (page 213). "By what degrees does nature raise herself up to man? How will she rectify this head that is always inclined toward the earth? How change these paws into flexible arms? What method will she make use of to transform these crooked feet into supple and skillful hands? . . . The ape is this rough draft of man: this rude sketch, an imperfect representation, which nevertheless bears a resemblance to him, and is the last creature that serves to display the admirable progression of the works of God" (page

[19] "Gitanjali," 11.

210). It might be added that modern science does not trace man's descent from the ape.

The idea of personality has been one of slow development, the reason for which is to be found more in social life and social ethics than in philosophy or theology. The idea could not come to clear realization until men saw more plainly the quality and value of human life, and so of each human being, as personal. That realization came along the Hebrew-Christian line, not along that of Greek thought or life, though Stoicism moved in that direction. Where Greek thought dominated, there the significance of this idea of personality in relation to God, and the thought of religion as a personal-ethical relation, suffered. The earlier thought of personality identified it too much with the idea of individuality, tending to make it a principle of individuation, instead of realizing that personality is a quality of life which individuals share rather than that which makes them different. The stress was laid upon person conceived as individual rather than upon the quality of being involved in personality. This defect is illustrated by Webb in chapter II and in the article, "Person," in "The Catholic Encyclopedia," with the definition of Boethius quoted in both places: "A person is an individual substance of rational nature."

III

THE DEMOCRACY OF GOD

Our constant effort in these studies has been to see the nature of God through his relation to his world and the meaning of God for the life of the world. This is distinctively the Christian method of knowing God as over against speculative philosophy on the one hand or dogmatic theology on the other. A theology which does not come from life is an ill-founded speculation; a theology which does not look out upon life is a useless abstraction. From such considerations in times past men have drawn the conclusion that we must have a theology of experience. Individual experience, subjective experience, is indeed important; but human experience is larger than that, and the world in which we are to find God and for which God has meaning is larger than that. In the last two lectures we have taken into account some of those changes in human experience which we express in terms of science: a universe whose boundaries have been pushed back inconceivably far in terms of time, of space, and of the infinitely small; a universe with the earth dislodged from its old place as central and supreme; a static world changed to one in which we

seek to understand everything in terms of energy and of development; a world of universal order.

These changes largely concern the world of nature. But there is another world, and religion is supremely concerned with this; that is the world of human nature, individual and social. To that world, especially on its social side, we now turn. What is the relation of God to this associated life of men, the life which men live together in home and community and industry and state? What is God's method with men in this life? What character does he here reveal? What is his significance here?

To answer these questions rightly we must consider the changes that have been taking place in this social world, and note their bearing upon our idea of God. If there has been a revolution in our conception of the natural world, a thoughtful consideration will show an almost equally revolutionary change in this world of social life and institution, a change which is still in process. However briefly and inadequately done, the main significance of this change must be brought out for the purpose of this study. We will consider first the change of social condition, then the change in social ideal or thought.

The change in social condition or organization is a commonplace to students. Woodrow Wilson gave it effective statement when he said: "Yesterday, and ever since history began, men were related to one another as individuals. . . . To-day the everyday relationships of men are largely with great impersonal concerns, with organizations, not with other individual

men. Now this is nothing short of a new social age, a new era of human relationship, a new stage-setting of the drama of life." [1] These words Graham Wallas puts at the head of his great discussion of this theme in his book, "The Great Society." Science, invention and engineering have done their work. Steam, steel, and capital have been principal agents. The industrial revolution is a name given to one aspect of the great change. The results are plain; human life is bound together so intricately, so closely, with such complexity, as to have wrought a social revolution in the life of the race.

The industrial side is, of course, fundamental. Once we had literally manufacture, "hand-making," now we have machine-making. That simple change has brought vast aggregates of capital into the control of a few, masses of population living together, diversification of industry, nations facing each other in economic rivalry which is always threatening to break out in war, while at the same time these nations are dependent one upon the other, each in the end suffering or advancing with the rest. Economically the world is one to-day, though we have not yet learned how to draw the conclusion and move from rivalry to coöperation.

Quite as significant is the change in the field of human intercourse. Even so late as the first years of this republic, men debated the wisdom of adding territories to the West, since it would make a country so large that its parts could not act together and so

[1] "The New Freedom," pages 6, 7.

could not come under one government. Distance and mountains and seas were great barriers then; there are no barriers now. There have always been migrations of humankind when the pressure of need or the lust of conquest was felt; but on the whole they were at long intervals, and comparatively slow in movement. In our day we have seen a tide of a million people from a score of lands around the globe flowing into this country year after year. The intercourse of mind made possible by modern invention and made necessary by industry and politics has been even more striking. Telegraph, telephone, wireless, radio—these have already become commonplace; but we have not begun to measure their meaning in making the world one community, nor yet the influence of that air travel of which we see as yet only the infancy. It may be that we have here the conditions in the making which will at last compel a common speech for humankind. With the change in industry and the change in intercourse, though more slowly, there have come the political changes. World empires have long been known in history, but they were largely external, imposed from without, a matter of conquest on the one hand and of taxes on the other. What we see to-day is a world trying to find some way in which to express in political union the needs and the facts of that common life that is already here and the larger communal world life that is waiting to be born.

This, however, we must note clearly: there is a big difference between union and unity. Classes and races and nations have been thrown together, but so far

we do not know whether out of it is to come a richer common life or a strife that will end in common destruction. The first result in all these spheres has been conflict: class against class in the industrial world, race prejudice and bitterness unknown in the days when in the main each race lived within given bounds, and the clash of nation with nation in economic rivalry and devastating wars.

Here is a life clamant in its demand upon religion, desperate in its need of religion. Social humanity is somewhat in the plight of one of those unfortunates with the strength and the passions of a man, and the mentality and morality of a child. And the danger from the moron in a community is only a suggestion of the danger of this stage of human life. We have conquered the forces of nature, we have multiplied our wants, we have released all manner of passions, even fostering some of them behind high names like patriotism and religion; but we have not learned wisdom and love and unselfishness and self-control and brotherhood in our communal life. And the Church is not blameless, the Church which has too often stood aside with an interest limited to the single soul and the life beyond, which has had no clear and commanding word about such great matters as war and social justice, and no great message about the meaning of God for these new tides of life such as the prophets had when they saw Jehovah in the life of Israel.

But now we must turn from social facts to social ideals. Such tremendous changes cannot go on without men concerning themselves as to their underlying

meaning and the moral ideals which should obtain in them. At the risk of the charge of over-simplification, let me select two social attitudes for purpose of description and contrast. That neither of these is ordinarily seen or stated in its full meaning does not alter the fact of their presence and profound influence in human society. They are indeed the rival social faiths competing for our suffrage to-day.

We may call the one the pagan faith. It can be stated very briefly. First, it believes that the highest values are material. The test of individual success is property and power; the goal of a nation is material well-being, extension of territory, balance of trade, command of markets and raw materials. Second, its rule of life is selfishness. In business its supreme appeal is to the motive of profit; it can conceive of no industry not based upon such an appeal and of no government acting from any motive except that of individual advantage. It has such mottoes as *"Deutschland ueber Alles,"* and "America first, last, and all the time." As Bernard Shaw suggests, it is very ready to sing,

"Britons never shall be slaves,"

but it is not at all averse to Britons being masters, or to making sure that Britannia rules the waves. Third, its dependence is upon force and cunning, and these are its gods. It may have its chaplains and prayers for formal occasions, and in the old days when it formed "holy alliances" it put pious phrases in the treaties which were instruments of theft and

oppression; but at heart it is quite convinced that "God is on the side of the heaviest battalions." In the industrial world the combination of selfishness and force takes other forms, but the principle upon which it holds secure a position of mastery is the same. Materialism, selfishness, and militarism—these are the three marks of paganism as a social creed.

To call the opposing position democracy may invite misunderstanding and criticism, especially if I go on to express the conviction that democracy rightly conceived is the expression of the Christian ideal in social relations. Nominally democracy represents the ideals of the American republic. In some of its larger meanings it received a noble exposition from Woodrow Wilson during the Great War, and a great deal of lip service from others who were following very different ideals at heart. In these years of cynicism and selfishness which have been the aftermath of the war it has been meeting a great deal of opposition from the most diverse of quarters, some of it outspoken, much of it veiled. Soviet Russia, "hundred per cent" patriots, the safe and sane business man who insists that we stand for republicanism and not democracy, the neo-aristocrats, whether scholars like McDougall or pamphleteers like Lathrop Stoddard, emancipated individualists like H. G. Mencken, the Nordic prophets with their new plan of world salvation, fundamentalist proclaimers of divine autocracy, Fascism abroad and its counterpart here, that latest misguided organization which compounds secrecy and reliance on force, and calls it Americanism—this strangely mixed company

is one in being either frankly opposed to democracy or skeptical of it. Despite all this, democracy represents in its varied aspects the greatest social movement of modern times, not often clearly understood, appearing in many different forms, yet representing in the minds of thoughtful men the only way out for humanity.

There is evident need here of analysis and definition, for it must be confessed that democracy is like the word "evolution" in being widely acclaimed, of large influence, and yet having very different meanings even for its followers. Let it be said first that democracy as here used means something far more than a form of political organization. It might better be described as a form of social faith concerned with the assertion of human values and the ways in which these are to be achieved. The first of its underlying principles is the sacredness of human personality. The end of government is the welfare of men; the test of the good state is to be found in the kind of life that it fosters. If a conflict of interest comes between property or vested rights or any other special interest on the one hand, and human welfare on the other, there is only one choice for democracy. And human personality means here not a particular group or class or kind, not a hereditary nobility or a Nordic race or a white breed or the bearers of a certain culture; it includes all men as men. Democracy does not, indeed, mean a leveling down; it can make room for those differences between men which are obvious to all. But it counts as more significant the fact of the common

humanity which unites than it does the differences that distinguish individuals or races. It insists that human beings as such, of every age and sex and race and kind, form one class, and that not the least member of this humankind should ever be treated as tool or property or mere means for some other who may be stronger or more cunning.

The second principle of democracy is that of freedom. Freedom it counts a good in itself. By freedom it means not anarchy nor license, but man's determination of his own life in the light of ideals of truth and right. Such a life, and only such a life, is in the full sense human. For that reason men are not content, when once awakened, with the most benevolent autocracy, though it assure them work and bread and peace. For that reason the concern of labor in industry is seen to be something more than wages and hours. The ideal which Christianity asserts for man's individual moral and religious life is held to obtain in the state and in industry.

Democracy here does not of course mean town meeting methods rule by the mob, or even the idea of a majority vote deciding all the details of political life. It does not exclude representative institutions of governments like those of Great Britain and the United States. It does involve the idea that in the important concerns of life represented by the state, the rank and file of men are to have a voice in determining what the conditions of their life shall be. Nothing more clearly illustrates this than the realization of the swift change in relation to the attitude toward war. But

a little while ago the decision of war, affecting for life and death and for the welfare of posterity millions upon millions, could be made by a small group of men, or could be rendered an inevitable event by processes of diplomacy which were hidden often from all but two or three of even those in charge of government. The tide of democracy has changed that radically in only a few years. That same determination of the common man to help shape the conditions under which he must live is at the beginning of even more significant development in the social-industrial world.

The third principle is that of solidarity. Individualism is not democracy. Individual life is achieved only in social relations. Humanity is not a sum of units; it is an organism, to use the figure of Paul, a body. In the still better picture of Jesus, it is a family, a brotherhood. The whole is concerned with the welfare of each part, and each individual lives his real life only in and through the whole.

And finally democracy is a faith. It is a faith in men. Not a sentimental idealization of humanity; you cannot add ignorance to ignorance and get wisdom, or unite a mass of selfish individuals and get a common spirit of devotion to high ends. The voice of the people is not the voice of God. But democracy is the faith that the whole of men can better be trusted to govern themselves, than we can trust one man or a few to have absolute power over their fellows. It is the belief that in the end, if there be education and a chance to know the truth and a full discussion of issues, the common people will find their way to what

is just and right. And that involves a deeper faith, the faith in truth and justice themselves. For in the end there are only two forces upon which we may depend for securing peace and order and a chance to live. The one force is physical and external; the autocracies of the world have depended upon this from of old. The other force is moral, rational, spiritual; upon this democracy relies. It believes that if truth be given a full opportunity it will make its way in the end. It believes that what is fair and just will in the end win the suffrage of men. It holds therefore to education and to the fullest freedom of thought and speech, not blind to the danger that lies in these, realizing fully how long the road will be and what errors will come by the way, but knowing also that no other road can lead to the goal and believing that the final victory is sure.

Even those who differ from these positions will admit that democracy, thus interpreted, represents the great social movement of modern times, and that the convictions that underlie it are to be distinguished from various efforts and experiments to give it expression in government, industry, and other forms of life, including international relations.

Fourth, democracy stands for authority, but for authority of a particular kind. It is true it rejects arbitrary and autocratic authority, but democracy is impossible without a rule, as is liberty itself. Nor is the final authority in democracy the will of the majority as is so often assumed. The will of the majority may be irrational, tyrannical, and utterly sub-

versive of democracy. There can be only one ultimate authority for democracy and that is the authority of what is true and just. It is the task and obligation of the people to discover this and to incorporate it in law; they do not of themselves make it. And in no other government is the very life of the state dependent upon such recognition of authority as in a democracy. As James Bryce put it in the closing chapter of his "Modern Democracies": "Governments that have ruled by Force and Fear have been able to live without moral sanctions or to make their subjects believe that those sanctions consecrated them, but no free government has ever yet so lived and thriven."

Fifth, democracy involves the principle of obligation. It is true that the popular idea makes of democracy a kind of a universal struggle for rights, or a system by which rights are assured to all. But the selfish demands of innumerable individuals would never make a social order. There can be no individual rights without a common righteousness, and unless the individual is obligated to maintain that righteousness it cannot exist for a moment. So far from asking less, democracy demands more than any other form of government. And its principle of obligation is *noblesse oblige;* we owe in the measure in which we possess. Democracy rests not upon self-assertion, but on self-devotion.

We are dealing here with a fundamental way of looking at life. What is the relation between this and Christianity? What does all this mean for our idea of God and his relation to the world? The ques-

tion of democracy, thus conceived, is one not simply for ethics but for theology.

From the standpoint of traditional theology, especially of the Augustinian-Calvinistic type, it must be said that Christianity has not much place for democracy. The relation of God to the world cannot be conceived on any such lines. God is not simply King, but an autocratic King, conceived in terms of Oriental despotisms. It is not that benevolence is excluded—the most absolute autocracy does not involve that—but the Institutes make abundantly plain that where power conflicts with moral ideal, even the ideal revealed in Jesus Christ, it is power that must be asserted. "Like the Scottist theologians with whom it is most natural to compare him, Calvin finds the essence of deity in will, and his supreme glory in the power of unrestricted choice." [2] From this flows naturally the idea of a static society organized along the lines of authority and submission, the authority descending from God to the kings ordained by him, the supreme Christian duty being unquestioning submission. And this applied to evil kings as well as the good. "The most iniquitous kings," says Calvin, "are appointed by the same decree which establishes all regal authority." The idea of resistance or revolution is naturally out of place. In case of wickedness and oppression, we are to "call up the remembrance of our faults," and then "reflect that it belongs not to us to cure these evils, that all that remains for us

[2] William Adams Brown, *American Journal of Theology*, X, 392.

is to implore the help of the Lord, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, and inclinations of kingdoms." [3] And as late as 1924 a committee of one of the largest Protestant bodies of this country reported at its national convention: "To declare unequivocally that war is sin is to say that the powers that declare war are not ordained of God."

The modern fundamentalist-premillennialist position is all on this side. The confident hopes of modern democracy concerning self-government are all doomed to disappointment, we are told.[4] But beyond that the Christian ideal is that of a theocratic absolutism. "The American system of government is based on the principle, 'Governments receive their just powers from the consent of the governed'—which principle is false. Governments derive their just powers from God. Democracy is the antithesis of autocracy—God's ideal of government." [5]

On the other side voices are raised which declare that democracy excludes Christianity, at least in any traditional form. "Loyalty to God," says a recent writer on "The Religion of the Social Passion," "is disloyalty to humanity." The opposition to religion on the part of Sovietism in Russia and at least of the older socialism of Germany is well known. Religion for them, not without ground in their experience, was

[3] "Institutes," Book IV, Chapter XX, pages 27, 29.

[4] S. B. Kellogg, *Bibliotheca Sacra,* XLV, 273, 274.

[5] From a letter in the *Christian Workers' Magazine,* official organ of the Moody Bible School. The editor approves: "We agree that, scripturally viewed, the basis on which our government rests is false."

simply a sanction given to the ruling powers and groups of privilege. With the same interpretation of Christianity, Bertrand Russell assumes that it has lost its hold upon the modern man, and declares: "If a religious view of life and the world is ever to reconquer the thoughts and feelings of freeminded men and women, much that we are accustomed to associate with religion will have to be discarded. The first and greatest change that is required is to establish a morality of initiative, not a morality of submission, a morality of hope rather than of fear, of things to be done rather than left undone. . . . The religious life that we must seek will be inspired with a vision of what life may be, and will be happy with the joy of creation, living in a large free world of initiative and hope." [6]

These two sides, then, agree at this point, that Christianity and democracy exclude each other. Are they not, however, both at fault in their understanding of the terms involved? Traditional Christianity, both as institution and doctrine, has tended to the autocratic, but religion in the terms of the prophets and of Jesus

[6] In "Principles of Social Reconstruction"; quoted by Matthews, "Studies in Christian Philosophy," pages 70, 71. Compare William James, "A Pluralistic Universe," pages 27, 30: "The older monarchical theism is obsolete or obsolescent. The place of the divine in the world must be more organic and intimate." With the theistic view, he declares, "Man, being an outsider and a mere subject to God, not his intimate partner, a character of externality invades the field. God is not heart of our heart, and reason of our reason, but our magistrate, rather; and mechanically to obey his commands, however strange they may be, remains our only moral duty."

shows a different situation. As to democracy, if the Church is to maintain its moral leadership, it must understand and appreciate, as it has not yet done, the significance of this movement. We may leave names to one side, we may choose some other word than "democracy" or leave it unnamed; but we must face the fact that there has been a movement of thought as significant for the realm of social life and values as evolution has been in biology or Copernicanism in our thought of the heavens. There is no phase of our modern life, political, industrial, family, international, interracial where the ferment of the new ideals is not working. The Church in fact is being profoundly influenced here. It sees that here is an expression of its vital concern, moral ideals and human values, and that these ideals and values are the fruitage and formulation of the Christian spirit. But the Church must do something more; it must furnish this movement its basic faith, its underlying conception of God and the world. In so doing, its traditional autocratic conception of God will be affected, but it will find richer meanings in the idea of God and it will give truer expression to the faith of the prophets and of Jesus. Our discussion of the democracy of God will be in line with the principles of democracy as suggested above.

For the God of the Christains, as for democracy, the sacredness of humanity is fundamental. The God of the prophets and of Jesus is a God who cares for men. His supreme concern is righteousness; and righteousness is not obedience to arbitrary rules, it

is first of all justice between man and man. The service which he desires is not fasting and offerings, but a service rendered to men: "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." [7] For Jesus men were not worms of the earth, they were children of God and of infinite worth. A single soul outweighed in value the whole earth.[8] God was concerned with the very least of these, so that the man who did injury even to a little child might better be drowned in the depths of the sea.[9] And this principle of reverence for human personality is not simply one which God imposes, but one which he himself obeys. He does not use men as things or treat them as puppets. He speaks to them as beings of his own kind: "Son of man," he says, "stand upon thy feet." "Come now, and let us reason together." And each one has value for him and a claim upon him, as does the lost sheep with the shepherd, or the errant son with his father. Such a faith, need it be said, is humanity's first *Magna Charta* of freedom. Over against all the autocracies of the past and the oppressions of the present, against the aristocracies with which men lift themselves above their fellows, there stands this God who counts all men his children and who declares, "I am for men."

Second, for this God of ours freedom represents both goal and method in his work with men. How often have men thought that religion meant suppres-

[7] Isaiah i. 16, 17.
[8] Mark viii. 36.
[9] Mark ix. 42.

sion, subordination, subjection, a sacrifice somewhere of mind or will, of beauty or truth or freedom. And so they have set their humanisms against religion and have pleaded for the chance of a free and full human life. And there has been some ground for this mistake. There have always been those who have thought of Christianity as an institution to which men must submit, a matter of rules or ritual or organization claiming a right to dominate. Not so Jesus. For him religion was a life to which he invited men, the life of a son, not the submission of a servant. The heart of Paul's great conflict with the Judaizers in the Church lay in this same insistence: "For freedom did Christ set you free." [10] The goal of God is a free humanity, men who believe because the truth of God has spoken to their minds, men who love and obey because the law is within their hearts, men who have found a free life and the fullest life in fellowship with God.

And this free life is the goal not simply for the individual but for the group. The old Messianic conception of the Jews was patterned after the autocracies with which men were familiar in that day, and its method was not changed by the fact that it was to be a benevolent autocracy. The idea survives as a strange anachronism in the premillennialism of to-day, but it does not represent the Christian thought of to-day any more than that of Jesus or Paul. As God lifts man higher in the fellowship of truth and love, there will be less need for constraint and compulsion and not

[10] Galatians v. 1.

more, less need of scepter and army and force applied from without. The goal can be nothing less than a humanity which has learned freely and in common action to shape all its associated life by the spirit of Christ. Ruled by the spirit of truth and justice and mercy, with enlightened mind that will at last have found the true way, it will mold home and school and state and industry according to the will of God. Another world might do for a race of servants, only such a world would be a worthy goal for the free sons of God.

But the idea of freedom belongs to the method of God as well as to the goal. It is not altogether easy to adjust our thinking to this idea. Theology has usually begun by simply asserting the absolute power of God. "Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he please." [11] "He commanded, and it stood fast." [12] That was all, and that was enough, simply to assert the power of God. But there is something more than that. There is a mode of action in the world of the spirit that corresponds with the principle of order, the reign of law, which now determines our conception of the world of nature. You cannot get results by compulsion in the realm of the spirit. Calvinism, with its sovereign decrees and its irresistible grace and its total depravity, is the mistaken effort along this line. It is true there are certain inevitabilities, certain necessities, in the divine order of the world, otherwise it would be an irrational uni-

[11] Psalm cxv. 3.
[12] Psalm xxxiii. 9.

verse. And there is the plain dependence of man upon God. But the highest life can come only by the way of freedom. Love is not love except when it is free; righteousness is an inner attitude and not an action under compulsion. There is only one real goodness and that is the goodness of the free spirit. There is only one way to character and that is by a free loyalty that persistently chooses the right. And that determines the method of God. He does not fling commandments at men. He does not override the will when he offers his grace and help; with a fine reverence for the human personality which he has made, he says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." [13] And in the picture which one great painter has made of that scene, the latchstring is on the inside.

We are coming to realize more deeply to-day the significance of this method for the social life, where before we thought of it only in relation to the individual. Men have dreamed of some single deed, some great experience, by which the world might be made over into the kingdom of God; they have been slow to learn what is the patience and wisdom of God. He does not "strive nor cry aloud." He does not drive. He is not a direct actionist. Direct action is a temptation, even to the good man and especially the reformer. If only we had power with a single blow to wipe out every vestige of the liquor traffic, or to destroy the last weapon of war! But God does not work that way. The appeal of truth to reason, the summons of

[13] Revelation iii. 20.

right to conscience, the hard tuition of suffering that comes when men and nations do wrong, the help that comes to those who try, the blessing for those that walk the way of justice and mercy—by ways like this God has led the race. In a striking paragraph on modern English conditions the late Arthur Gleason wrote: "God has always granted England time to grope. He is a slow and constitutional worker himself, using trial and error. The devil is a fiery revolutionary."

But what of the principle of authority, and where is the sovereignty of God? The Christian principle of authority abides, but it needs to be understood. The heart of the highest religion lies in the fact that man finds something which for him is holy—that is, something that has the right to command. The error has been that this right to command has so often been found in something merely external. When that happens, it ceases to be something that liberates and becomes that which enslaves, an arbitrary authority. It may be in a dogma or the letter of a sacred writing or the assumption of the ecclesiast; but it is not a spiritual authority, an authority that has a right to command free men, except as it establishes its right within the soul. When that happens, obedience becomes the way of freedom. Such is the authority of God. If God were sheer power compelling submission, then the highest deed of man might be a Promethean defiance. But God is not a mere Power above that compels; he is a truth and a right that we know within. When we summon men to give themselves

to this God, we are asking them to give themselves to truth and righteousness and love and beauty which have their being in him. It is that to which Jesus summoned men to surrender.

Further, the Christian God acknowledges for himself the law of obligation which is essential to democracy. Democracy at its highest, as we saw, is not a clamor for rights but a passion for righteousness, the vision of a new and higher order in which humanity shall have its true life, and the devotion of self to that end. And such obligation, we noted, was to be in the measure of possession. That law of obligation Jesus recognized for himself. Was he a revelation of God in this? He must have been or else we have found something to worship that is higher than God himself, and have gone back to the pagan idea that God is power transcending right. It is an error, of course, to speak of God being under the law of obligation in the sense that right is something apart from him or above him. This holy obligation of love *is* God; this is his very nature as revealed to us. The cross was not an unnatural episode; the life of utter love and service which the incarnation shows was only the making clear to men of the eternal spirit of God. Love, service, sacrifice—that is God. By the infinite measure of his wisdom and power and goodness, God is the obligated servant and savior of man. We make it present tense: "In all their affliction he is afflicted, and the angel of his presence saves them." [14] And the obligation comes not from our deserving, but from

[14] Isaiah lxiii. 9.

the nature of mercy and goodness itself, which is his nature.

There is a final element in democracy which we find in God and that is the element of faith—faith in men first of all, and then faith in the power of moral and spiritual forces, in truth and righteousness and love. A study of the anti-democratic movements and forces of the world to-day will usually show two aspects. First that of selfishness, the desire of one group or class or people to retain the privileges and power which they have. Secondly, there is a fundamental feeling of distrust, a lack of faith in men, in the common man, in the colored man, in the foreigner, or as the case may be. The Christianity of Christ stands for a directly opposed spirit. It declares, with Whitman, that it will not ask for itself what others cannot have upon equal terms; and it is ready to trust the common man. We know the confidence that Jesus put in common men. It was to a little group of common men that he committed the deepest interests with which he was concerned, and it was to common people that he brought the gifts of his love and of those transforming ideas which he poured out so prodigally in his speech. He did not, however, put his trust simply in men as he found them; he believed in the men that were to be. He believed that human nature could be transformed. He believed that men would answer to truth and justice and love. Men are saying to-day, "Look at human nature; with human nature as it is you cannot have democracy, you cannot expect to abolish war," just as they said a while ago, "You

cannot wipe out the brothel or the saloon, with human nature as it is." Democracy does not believe that its ideals can come with a humanity as it is, with the ignorance and passions and selfishness that we have to-day; but it believes in a humanity that can be educated and informed and changed. Christianity believes that human nature can be redeemed and it trusts in moral and spiritual forces to achieve this. That is the faith of democracy. That was the faith of Jesus, and we believe that here, too, Jesus is the revelation of God.

It remains for us to note what Christianity as a religion has to offer to that growing democracy which represents the highest social ideals of our day. What does the faith in a God like this mean to the men who hold these ideals?

First, it offers an ideal of life. It summons men to freedom. It has that morality of initiative and responsibility for which Bertrand Russell calls in his religion of the future. Its God is not an autocrat demanding blind submission. It summons men not to servitude, but to free fellowship with the infinite Spirit of good will. It shows men a world that is in the making and a God who invites man to share in his creative task.

Second, it affords democracy an authority that it can accept, one that is not arbitrary and external, but that presents itself to mind and conscience as the appeal of justice and truth. In such an authority it supplies one of democracy's deepest needs. For the danger of democracy is that, having overthrown the

old autocracies, it will find itself without any authority at all. And that is largely the situation to-day. Men are insistent upon their rights and their desires; they fail to see that unless they unite in a common obedience to truth and justice and a common devotion of life, there can be no freedom and no large social life. So we have disunion and disorganization between class and class, between land and land. That weakness can be healed alone by finding some highest Righteousness, a God in whom goodness and power are one, and whom men can obey.

Third, it offers a moral dynamic. Democracy is not simply a form of organization waiting merely to be adopted and then able to run itself. It is a social faith and a moral power that must first live in the hearts of men. It demands vision, patience, self-control, self-subordination, devotion, coöperation. These are spiritual qualities, and without them democracy will fail. Christianity is a religion that has the power to produce this spirit in men.

Finally, it offers a needed faith. It bids men believe in the midst of their struggles for a better world, that the final power that rules this world is a God of righteousness and good will. However strong brute force may seem, however deeply intrenched may be injustice and oppression, whatever the depth of ignorance, the issue is never in doubt. Whatever the temporary turn of battle, he who fights on God's side and that of man never fights in vain. For God himself is fighting. He is no idle spectator, no distant and indifferent ruler. He is the comrade of men, he

is their fellow toiler. Nay, more, he works in men and through men. It is his passion for righteousness that burns in their hearts, his courage that fills their breasts, his strength that strikes down evil, his love that binds them together. Bertrand Russell has pictured "A Free Man's Worship": "Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day." [15] This is no free man's worship, but only his cry of despair. Not in such a universe may we ever expect a free humanity, but rather in one in which a God of freedom and righteousness summons men to the faith and the task, and gives them assurance of the final issue.

[15] "Mysticism and Logic," pages 56, 57.

IV

GOD AND THE WORLD OF EVIL

THE problem of evil is one that is inseparable from any study of the meaning of God and from any study of religion itself. For the central conviction of religion is God, and the conviction of God means the faith that the good and the real are one, that our ideals are not empty dreams that we cherish, but are real, indeed the highest reality, the final Power in this world.

But it is one thing to see the Lord high and lifted up when we worship in the temple; it is another to go out into the world and look at nature and history and human life and say: Justice rules here, love controls, goodness is triumphant. On every hand the facts seem to contradict the thought that a good God rules the world. We look at the world of history: what a tangle of unmeaning events it shows. We look at human society: how constantly brute force and cunning and selfishness seem to have their way. Consider the years that have followed the Great War; how little has suffering fallen upon the guilty of all lands, what woe has come to great multitudes of those whose greatest fault was to practice the virtue lauded in all

our modern world of being "loyal" to your country—that is, to the political or other leaders in control! And round about us, every day what suffering do we not see of the innocent for the guilty.

It is not different if we turn to nature, except that nature seems to show, not so much injustice or cruelty, as an utter indifference. Long ago Socrates said: "If the gods do not prefer the good man to the evil, then it is better to die than to live." How utterly intolerable life would be in a world in which the Power that ruled were either itself malevolent or else wholly indifferent to good or evil. Yet nature seems to be so ruled. There is a terrible obverse to the words of Jesus when he spoke of the God who made his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sent his rain on the just and the unjust. For we must add that flood and fire come down on the good and the evil, and earthquake and pestilence destroy the just with the unjust. The nature which modern science presents us seems like a great mechanism of forces that blindly follow undeviating law, ending indifferently in life or death, in beauty or horror.

There are some answers to this problem which have had large place in the Christian thought of the past, but which cannot any longer satisfy us, though there may be larger or lesser measure of truth in them. There is the opinion taken over from Judaism and the Old Testament that evil can be explained as the consequence that follows upon sin; even the men of the Old Testament (see Job and various Psalms) saw the facts of life which made this impossible. There

is the traditional idea of theology that a world which was perfectly good and free from pain and death through the single deed of one man became at a stroke wholly evil, involving in this fate all nature and the succeeding generations of mankind. For us animate creation, with its suffering and death, antedates too far the coming of man, and the supposed solution only heightens our difficulty by what it imposes on the many for the fault of the one. The traditional Calvinistic position which appeals to the inscrutable decrees of God does not meet the question, but simply gives it up. So in fact does apocalypticism, including modern premillennialism; it seeks the answer in some future age, but in doing so despairs of finding any meaning in history, which is just an unexplainable interlude in which God for some hidden reason has given over the world to the rule of evil.

There are certain fundamental facts and insights which any discussion must take into account that hopes to answer this question for the faith of a modern man. Let us state them briefly. The world of nature is everywhere under the orderly process of law. The method of God's work in the world is that of immanent power. Creation is a continuous activity of God. All spiritual life rests upon the natural and grows out of it, first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. The higher life can come only as a life of freedom, by way of conflict and slow achievement. It can come only as social life, and therefore human life must be considered never as merely individual, but always in relation to a social whole. This higher

life, moral, spiritual, a life like that of God, is alone that to which we can give absolute value, and it is worth all the years and the tears and the cost of its achievement.[1] On the basis of these considerations we might state our guiding principles in three simple words. Look at the highest, that is our clue to the meaning of the world. Look at the whole, for only in its relation to that can the meaning of any part be seen. Look at the end, "the last of life for which the first was planned."

Let it be said in frankness, finally, that there is no demonstration to be offered here. We move here in the world of values which can be felt but cannot be proven. The final demand is a demand upon faith, a demand to trust the world and undertake with courage the great task of life. The final assurance will come only to a life that has responded to this demand. And yet there is light here: it is not a leap in the dark to which we call men. And it is worth following what light we have in this supreme question.

> "This world's no blot for us, nor blank;
> It means intensely and means good;
> To find its meaning is our meat and drink." [2]

The seeming moral indifference of nature furnishes our first problem. Nature makes no distinction between the evil and the good. Where is the providence that watches over the children of men? What difference did nature ever make between saint and sinner?

[1] See Troeltsch, Art., *"Theodizee,"* Bd. V, Sp. 1189, *"Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart."*

[2] Browning, "Fra Lippo Lippi."

The reign of law, science calls it. But has not that idea of law changed the world from a house in which a Father rules to the semblance of a great machine? What we seem to face is a Power that neither knows nor cares, but bears us on with all else that lives toward a common doom.[3]

But suppose we consider a moment what the alternative to all this would be. It seems a simple matter to ask God to adjust the happenings of nature in detail to fit our prayer or our desert. A certain saint with such a faith stood up in prayer meeting one evening and gave thanks to God for the dry summer that was just past. "When we received word last spring," he explained, "that my mother-in-law was to visit us, I knew how bad a rainy season would be for her asthma. So I prayed the Lord that we might have no rain, and I am very grateful for this answer to prayer." And then, apparently for the first time, another angle suggested itself and he turned to the rest with the remark, "I hope it did not inconvenience any of you." Whereupon one of those frank souls, who bring the breath of reality into places where it is needed, promptly replied, "You certainly did." A world in whose physical order such constant interference or change was taking place would be in effect a world of chance, of anarchy, a world essentially incalculable.

Or consider the question from the standpoint of the character of God. What kind of a world would one expect from a God of perfect wisdom? Would it not

[3] See William James, "The Will to Believe," page 41.

be a world of order? And would not the same order be needed to reflect the consistency, the dependableness, to use the Old Testament phrase, the faithfulness of God? The world of ordered and uniform happening, so far from suggesting moral indifference, is demanded by the moral character of God.

But what of the moral significance of this uniform order which we call the reign of law? If it were possible without utter anarchy to have a world that would adjust natural events moment by moment to moral desert, how would it compare in moral results with the present order? Would it not seem like a world of righteousness? That depends upon our idea of a righteous world order. If it means an external system imposed upon man, then it might follow. But for most of us righteousness is not primarily such an external order; it is a passion in the hearts of men, it is an inner spirit and devotion, not a calculation of profitable results but a faith that is willing to go against appearances; it is not something furnished to man, but that which is to grow up in humanity. A God who settled up accounts every day would have a set of time-serving subjects, not a family of free sons.

Turn to the present world in which we live. (Keep in mind the large look that takes in the social whole, the long look that has regard to history and not the moment, and the high look that concerns itself with life at its best.) It is this world of inflexible order, but of order upon which a man can count, that is needed for the growing of a human race. It is a

calculable, a knowable world, summoning man to understand its ways and to master its forces. It is the only kind of world that man could in real fashion know and use. Upon this order he has built his science, his engineering, his arts. So far as we can see, only in such a world could rational life develop. This is the world for the making of rational beings.

Equally it is a world for the development of moral life. We are apt to think of morality in terms of high ideals that come to command the conscience; its beginnings, however, rest back in certain habits, or customs (*mores*) of individual and group which were found necessary to the furtherance of welfare. Such customs were restraints upon action that otherwise merely followed impulse or passion or individual interest. If there was to be human life, as above that of the beast, man had to master the impulse of the moment and look to the future, to learn self-control, to practice industry, to associate himself with others for common life and effort. What drove him to this? It was the experience that came to him in a world of inexorable order, a world where idleness was followed by hunger, and isolation by suffering, and wrong deeds by sure consequence. Even to-day, our race would go to pieces morally in a generation if our world should become one of uncertainty and chance. And let it be plainly understood, you cannot have a world of order in nature and at the same time a world in which some power from without with whatever high motive, is ever making adjustment to suit individual cases.

The second problem that faces us is that of the seeming cruelty of nature as seen in all the pain and suffering of the world. It is not simply that suffering may follow upon wrongdoing, but that pain and hardship and struggle, everywhere we turn, are inseparable from life itself, and so much of the pain seems futile.

Our first issue here is one of values. Our age has multiplied creature comforts as no other day, but it has come to put an excessive value upon ease and pleasure and physical well-being, and it has developed an excessive fear of poverty and pain and toil. We need a truer scale of values. It is life that counts, life that brings with it wisdom and patience and strength and sympathy and insight, a faith that reaches up to God, an understanding that moves out to our fellow men. If the suffering and toil are necessary to this end, then with Browning we may

> "welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough."

Let us begin with pain, which seems the most negative and useless. Why a world of pain? The physician answers, because pain is a necessary means of warning and defense. What physician would care to practice his art in a world in which there was no pain? How, indeed, could he? It is the red signal which warns the patient, guides the physician, and makes possible the healing art. It seems fair to suppose that man's higher sensibility to pain has had a relation to his higher achievement in life. It is "a spur to wise action

in the process of human adjustment."[4] And that is true of man's advance in the higher reaches of life. From the soil of suffering there has sprung the fruitage of patience, courage, thoughtfulness, sympathy, kindliness, devotion. Would the doors to the deeper meanings of life be open in a world without struggle and pain? From out of her walls of utter darkness and silence, Helen Keller has spoken with moving words on this theme. "Most people measure their happiness in terms of physical pleasure and possession. If happiness is to be so measured, I who cannot hear or see have every reason to sit in a corner with folded hands and weep. . . . As sinners stand up in meeting and testify to the goodness of God, so one who is called afflicted may rise up in gladness of conviction and testify to the goodness of life. . . . The struggle which evil necessitates is one of the greatest blessings. It makes us strong, patient, helpful men and women. It lets all into the soul of things and teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it."[5]

The question of human toil and struggle is closely linked to this problem of pain. How full of burden and conflict seem the days of man. Whether he toils

[4] See article on "The Meaning and Use of Pain," Dr. Lawrence Irwell, the *Medical Times,* quoted in the *Literary Digest* of February 10, 1917. It is a well-known fact that increasing sensitiveness to pain marks the ascent in the scale of life. The same is true when we come to the human race and the advancing stages of culture. We may lament this as an incidental misfortune or a mark of weakness. Is it not rather a condition of advance at each stage, physical, cultural, spiritual?

[5] "Optimism," pages 13, 17.

for his bread, or seeks to keep dread disease from his door, or craves the higher gifts of liberty and peace, nature seems ever to turn a hard face toward him and exact the fullest measure of toil and conflict and vigilance as the condition of his desire. But is nature so unfriendly? Is not this far kinder than the foolish weakness which we sometimes show to our children? How else could strength come if there were no conflict or resistance? The lands where food is plentiful and the least of toil is needed are not the lands that have seen the highest fruitage of humanity. There are gifts that can be dropped into idle hands, but the highest goods do not come that way. You may give a man bread without cost to himself, but not strength or wisdom or freedom or peace or love. We must give assent to the words of a recent writer, who describes with sympathy the struggles of various peoples for a larger measure of freedom, and then says: "It probably will seem a very cruel thing to say, but if I were the great Molder of the Universe, I would not turn a hand or pull a cord to give the struggling, submerged peoples of the world their freedom. It is the dreaming and fighting and sacrificing that makes them worthy and prepares them for it." [6] No nation is deserving of political and social liberties except as it wins them again in each generation. As a matter of fact no nation ever remains in possession of such liberties unless it wins them for itself in each new day, fighting the old fight which appears with each age in some new form.

[6] Frazier Hunt, "The Rising Temper of the East," page 243.

It would be easy to mistake the meaning of that fight which the men of social faith and passion are waging to-day, whose front is directed chiefly against war and social injustice. It would seem as though such men were trying to make a world in which there should no longer be toil and conflict. As a matter of fact the campaign against social injustice is not an effort to remove conflict, but to remove handicaps, to give a fair chance for all the children of men. The plea for coöperation means simply that men must find a way of turning their forces against the common foes of ignorance and poverty instead of rending each other. And what shall we say of war? We remember the stirring words in Browning's "Luria":

> "They called our thirst of war a transient thing;
> 'The battle element must pass away
> From life,' they said, 'and leave a tranquil world.'
> —Master, I took their light and turned it full
> On that dull turgid vein they said would burst
> And pass away; and as I looked on life,
> Still everywhere I tracked this, though it hid
> And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,
> Changed shape and hue yet ever was the same.
> Why, 'twas all fighting, all their nobler life!
> All work was fighting, every harm—defeat,
> And every joy obtained—a victory!"

There are those whose hatred of war has made them feel that we should banish the pictures of conflict from our religious speech, that we should no longer think of Jesus as the Captain of mankind, or longer sing,

> "The Son of God goes forth to war."

But Browning was right, the Browning who could

say, "I was ever a fighter." What we want is not to banish war, but to change it. The war which uses for weapons brute force, which sets men to starve and poison and kill their fellow men, that war is hell, and is more hellish to-day than it was two generations ago when a great general so described it. But so long as there is evil of any kind on earth, Christianity will summon men to take all the weapons of truth and love and courage and devotion and fight to the end.

Let it be said again, the highest gifts of life can come to men only as they struggle for them, nor are they less God's gifts because they come this way. He who sees this truth will ask no deliverance from the struggle.

"Let us have peace, and thy blessing,
Lord of the wind and the rain,
When we shall cease from oppressing,
From all injustice refrain;
When we hate falsehood and spurn it;
When we are men among men.
Let us have peace when we earn it,
Never an hour till then.

"Let us have rest in thy garden,
Lord of the rock and the green,
When there is nothing to pardon,
When we are whitened and clean.
Purge us of skulking and treason,
Help us to put them away.
We shall have rest in thy season;
Till then the heat of the fray.

"Let us have peace in thy pleasure,
Lord of the cloud and the sun;
Grant to us æons of leisure
When the long battle is done.

Now we have only begun it;
Stead us!—we ask nothing more.
Peace—rest—but not till we've won it—
Never an hour before." [7]

With the third aspect of the problem of evil we turn from nature to human nature, and that on the social side; the problem is that of the unjust suffering which comes to man because of his relation to his fellow men. Nothing in life seems more tragic or unfair than this. Back of our great wars there lies not the suffrage of the many, but the selfish aims or folly of the few; yet the multitudes must suffer, the children starve, the women go lonely, the men be slaughtered or maimed, and the toilers bear intolerable burdens for generations. Men go on their way of heedless lust and little children are cursed with sightless eyes or blighted bodies and souls. On every side the punishment of greed and hate and folly seems to fall on the innocent.

Here again we must face the fact of alternatives. In our loose thinking it is so easy to demand of God a justice that shall be purely individual, each man suffering only for his own misdeeds, while yet we ask for all the goods that come from a social life. But right here we must reckon with the full meaning of the social fact: the highest life, in fact any human life, is possible only as we are bound together, and that high life is worth the cost. Human personality never could appear in a solitary individual; Tarzan of the apes is possible only in fiction. And the higher

[7] Bert Leston Taylor, in the *Chicago Tribune*.

we move in the scale of life the more closely are men united and the wider the scope of that union. A man may feel by himself and work by himself, but if there is to be love he must join himself to another. The greatest treasures of life are inseparable from these social bonds, from home, community, friendship, church, country. Truth, beauty, justice, loyalty, love, these have come to being only in the associated life of men.

Such association heightens of necessity the possibility of human suffering. One branch does not feel it when another is sundered from the trunk, but when one member suffers the whole body bears the pain. Yet every day reveals again the willingness of men to endure the cross and despise the shame for the joy that is set before them. Every friendship means increase of responsibility and sympathy and possible suffering. The home gives proof that in the closest fellowship joy and pain are inseparably intertwined. This does not mean that individually we sit down and conclude that we will take the evil because it is a condition of the higher good. It is rather that men, seeing the joy that is set before them, life with all its high meaning, count the toil and pain not as negligible incident, but as that which is to be borne willingly and bravely.

And then, with the Christian conception, we go one step further. We gain the idea of vicarious suffering, suffering that has a meaning, suffering for others and in the place of others, suffering that has love in its heart and so is transformed in its inner nature. The

Christian faith declares that the cross of Christ was not accident and not tragedy, however great the guilt of human agents in that event; it declares that God was acting there, that God himself was suffering there, and that in that suffering there was healing for human life. Such love and suffering, it declares, is not an incident, but is eternal in the nature of God. As Browning has put it:

> "This is the authentic sign and seal
> Of godship, that it ever waxes glad
> And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts
> Into a rage to suffer for mankind,
> And recommences at sorrow, drops like seed.
> Surely it has no other end and aim
> Than to drop, once more die into the ground,
> Taste cold and darkness, and oblivion there;
> And thence rise, tree-like grow through pain to joy,
> More joy and most joy—do man good again."

Christianity calls to man and says: In all your affliction God is afflicted; he suffers in all the pain of men. That pain is not useless. And he who brings to it the right spirit drinks the cup which Jesus drank and, so doing, enters into the highest life of God.

The fourth element of our problem comes when we think of the individual in relation to the idea of development. There is, of course, a real help for faith in this thought of development. It gives to history a meaning. All that apocalypticism could say was that some time the good would be established, but it could give no meaning to the evil ages that lay between. We see more clearly now that humanity must reach its goal by growth, that whatever may be our dependence

upon God for that triumph, the future must come out of the past. Our toil and pain then are not without meaning. In them God is working toward his great end. So we count our affliction as light while we look to the things that are not seen and yet are sure and eternal. And while history gains a meaning, so does our individual life; we have a chance in this growing world, we may have a part in its making. There may be souls who would prefer a world that was perfectly safe and made for comfort and ease, but we may be sure the highest souls answer to a different call. For in the highest life there is something of the spirit of a Paul, pressing on from the fields where the real work has been done to some untried Spain which calls to courage and offers high opportunity.[8]

But what of the individual himself in this long story? Modern science has made us think of human history on this globe in terms of scores and even hundreds of thousands of years. What of the long generations who had little knowledge and less help in the years that lie before history dawned?

> "Oh, the generations old
> Over whom no church bell tolled.
> Christless lifting up blind eyes
> To the silence of the skies!"

For us as Christians it is not enough to say that their lives found their meaning as a necessary first step for that which was to come; for us, human life in its least members can never be a mere means to some one

[8] Compare William James, "Pragmatism," page 290.

else's end. And what of the lives imperfect, frustrated, failures in our own day?

I am not raising here the question of sin and its punishment, nor asking whether man may so use opportunity that a fixed and unchangeable character results for which there is no help here or beyond. Our question concerns the lives without opportunity and the lives that were not fixed. And here Christian thought is far less dogmatic and far more hopeful than it once was. So much at least we can say. Before we charge to God's score these lives that had so much of pain, so little of chance, let us be sure that his long years have not for them more in store than hard and fast theories have fixed in the past.

The discussion of the problem of evil is inevitably of a somewhat negative and apologetic character. In it faith is put upon the defensive. And yet in summing up we can discern more positive conclusions. First of all, modern thinking helps us to a stronger position than was possible for the traditional viewpoint. We are not dealing with a finished world which has been turned out as the direct product of sheer omnipotence. From that standpoint it is impossible to justify the ways of God with man. We have a truer appreciation of how power is conditioned, of the manner in which it must work when it deals with life, and especially moral-spiritual life. The world for us is a growing world, not one that is fixed and finished. Life itself is in the making and we cannot judge human life, in whole or in its individual mem-

bers, till we see the end. In the second place, the very study of this problem leads us to deeper insight and truer conception of the character of God and his way with the world. In the light of this discussion how shall we sum up our faith?

We believe in a God of utter goodness, in whom righteousness and truth and love have even now their full and true being. We believe that this God has in himself fullness of life and that all life comes from him and all being depends upon him. Because of his very goodness, which is love, this infinite Spirit seeks for other being to which he may give of his life, a world of nature in which beauty and wisdom shall appear, but above all a world of personal being which can make response to him in understanding and loyalty and love, in a true personal fellowship of a life like his own. And here we face one of those final facts, those ultimate data which cannot be further grounded in reason: life itself, if it is to be individual being, if it is to have character and meaning, must have a certain freedom, a chance at self-achievement through growth with all of effort and conflict and possible error that is involved. And so creation comes to be, not mechanical but a vital process, a method that has large place for trial and error, a way that is long and slow and hard and full of toil and pain. And yet the Eternal Spirit does not stand outside the life of his world. He is not simply at the beginning and at the goal; he is help and direction in it all. And in the long story of mankind, he is comrade and toiler

and fellow-sufferer. And he is the assurance of victory. Not because he will force the conclusion at last when freedom fails, but because the forces which he employs in the way of freedom are mightier than all that oppose: love stronger than selfishness, good will mightier than hate, truth more potent than darkness, justice more enduring than unrighteousness. And life, life like this, seems good, life which calls for faith and courage, life which brings suffering and labor, yet which in all this may be conscious of the fellowship of God, life which is sure of final triumph.

Such a vision cannot but give to him who holds it courage for life and joy in living. And yet this is not the last word of Christianity nor the first. This is an appeal to the mind and, if I may make the contrast so bald, the final appeal of Christianity is to the will. It summons men to an act of faith, that faith which is neither knowledge nor blind credulity, but the courage of a soul that will act out its life on the basis of the highest that it knows, supremely on the basis of that vision of God and of the meaning of life which comes to us in Jesus Christ. He who thus loyally gives himself will find another kind of answer to the problem of evil, whether he finds further light for the mind or not. He will discover that this Good to which he surrenders himself is real, that the God in whom he trusts is good. He will find that this Good in the world of his soul as in the world about him is mightier than evil; more and more he will be sure that evil is here only to be overcome. And he will discover that, with the right attitude on his part, there takes place

a strange transmutation by which evil itself becomes for him the occasion and means of good.[9]

[9] See L. P. Jacks, "Religious Perplexities," page 80. "In its essence the Gospel is a call to make . . . the experiment of fellowship, the experiment of trusting the heart of things, throwing self-care to the winds, in the sure and certain faith that you will not be deserted, forsaken, or betrayed, and that your ultimate interests are perfectly secure in the hands of the Great Companion. This insight, this sure and firm apprehension of a spirit at hand, swiftly responsive to any trust we have in its answering fidelity, coming to our way the moment we beckon it, motionless and irresponsive till we hoist the flag of our faith and claim its fellowship, but then mighty to save—this is the center, the kernel, the growing point of the Christian religion, which, when we have it all else is secure, and when we have it not all else is precarious."

For further discussion of the general problem see Chapter II of the author's "A Working Faith."

V

THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

THE truest definition of Christianity is Jesus Christ. One of the earliest and best Christian creeds is that contained in Paul's phrase, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," or, as a modern writer has put it, "I believe in God through Jesus Christ our Lord." [1] At whatever point we consider Christianity, whether it be its conception of life, its thought of man, its doctrine of salvation, its idea of the Church, its hope for the future, everywhere it is Jesus who determines its nature. And that is eminently true of its thought of God which is the heart of its faith. It is in this light that our study has been made so far, but we need now to turn specifically to this consideration: What is the meaning of God as known in Jesus Christ?

Our study is not primarily, let it be noted, a study of the nature of Christ, but of the nature of God. There has been a curious inversion here in the history of Christian thought. The writers of the New Testament with a sure touch show that their supreme interest in Christ is that in him they know God and have God. Their great question is the question about

[1] James Denney.

God: Can we know him? What is he like? What is his will for us, what his purpose? And they have found an answer in Jesus. Jesus they know, and in him God is known. "God was in Christ," says Paul, summing up the message of the Christian embassy.[2] "No man hath seen God at any time," says the author of the Fourth Gospel; "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[3] The theologies of the Church, however, have spent little time in discussing the difference which Jesus has made in man's thought of God; and you by no means always gain the impression that the God of the creeds is above everything else the Christlike God. On the other hand a vast amount of time has been spent in considering the other question of the nature of Christ and whether he be really like God. But, as Bishop Temple suggests: "To ask whether Christ is divine is to suggest that Christ is an enigma while deity is a simple and familiar conception. The truth is the exact opposite to this. We know, if we will open our eyes and look, the life and character of Christ; but of God we have no clear vision."[4] And Christian thinking has no greater need than this, to ask seriously what it means really to believe that we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Can there be any greater conviction than this, that in a world of mingled darkness and broken gleams there has come to us a sure light, that

[2] 2 Corinthians v. 19.
[3] John i. 18.
[4] "Foundations," page 214.

the Eternal Spirit has surely and fully revealed himself to us by appearing in time, and has let us know what he is and what we may hope for?

And first we need to turn to the historic Jesus. What was this life in time in which the Eternal was known to men? Nineteen centuries ago a young man went forth from his home in a village of an outlying Roman province. All his years had been lived in humblest surroundings; he was the son of an artisan and himself had worked at the carpenter's bench. But his heart had been stirred by the tale of a prophet that had arisen, and his soul answered to the message of righteousness and repentance and coming deliverance which came from the stern preacher. Asking for himself also the rite of baptism, he who had lived his life in simplest, purest fellowship with God, received the assurance that he was the Deliverer whom his nation expected. Driven by the Spirit of God, stirred to his depths by the great conviction of his mission, he leaves the prophet and the throngs to be alone with God and the question of his life. And so at last he goes forth, not to assert authority, not to claim homage as king or rally a people to throw off the yoke of their foes, but as a humble teacher, wandering up and down the land, speaking to who would listen. Great multitudes follow him, attracted by healings which he wrought, only to leave him when the searching demand of his message becomes plain. More and more he gives himself to the little group of his close followers. To them he declares at length that he must bear his witness in the city of his people,

though he sees the danger even more clearly than they. There in the great city, after but a few short years of work, the leaders whose enmity he has won put him to death. That death he meets, not without a struggle, but with the final assurance that by his very death he is serving God's end and that the future is sure. The event confirmed his faith; his death was not the end, but the beginning of the greatest religious movement of mankind.

Jesus left behind him, as we know, no writings, and of those words of his, flung forth upon the air, probably not one was written down in his lifetime. He left no organization or prescription for any, so far as record shows. He left no creed for men to accept, no code prescribed for conduct. But it takes little study to show the immense advantage which Christianity has had in the possession of this life story. That is illustrated in her struggle with the two main forms of religion that competed with her for the suffrage of the Roman world. On the one hand were the mystery religions, in externals not without some likeness to Christianity, offering salvation through various rites to the members of a fellowship gathered about the figure of some hero god. But Dionysus and Mithra and Isis and Attis were mythical figures; Jesus had lived among men and to his life and teachings men could always turn. On the other hand were the speculative systems, whether the older Grecian philosophies or the theosophies which then as now came from the East. Against them the new faith brought to bear the conviction that in this historic life and

death a living God had come to men and had done something for men.

Such is the plain historic fact. What is the meaning which Christianity has found in this fact? Why is Jesus not simply one among other great teachers, but central and supreme? What is it in the experience of men that has led them to give him this absolute place? It is not enough to quote titles from the New Testament; our theology is not made by words, even from the Bible. We must go back to the experience of the Church, the historic Church and the living Church of to-day, and ask what it was which led men to use these names for Jesus.

We put first the moral lordship of Jesus. The Church has called him Lord and Master, and the consciousness of this authority is evident in Jesus himself. He called unto him whom he would, and they followed him. He demanded the utmost of men, an absolute obedience which reached the inmost thoughts and desires as well as outward words and deeds. He took the highest authority of the past and said, "It is written; . . . but I say unto you." This absolute authority does not mean external authority. It was not to himself in individual fashion that Jesus required submission; it was to the truth, to love, to righteousness, to God. Only, he knew that these were in him and spoke through him. His ethics was the ethics in which authority and freedom united, in which men were set free because they had found the highest and surrendered utterly to it. It was an ethics of the spirit. Nothing more terrible could happen than to have the

light that was in a man turn into darkness: nothing better could happen than for a man to have in him the spirit of the Father and to live that spirit out as the brother of men.

This moral mastery of Jesus appears at two places. First of all he has made plain to us what human life is, the life in which a man achieves his real self. We talk about humanity being weak and wicked and foolish. But that is not real humanity; that is humanity gone astray, or humanity on the road with its goal still far off. The real meaning of humanity we see in Jesus. There we see what we ought to be, our real selves. And more and more men are recognizing that. We may be laggard in obedience, or faithless in performance, or we may set up the standard of our own selfish will, but for thoughtful and sincere men Jesus is becoming more and more the conscience of the race.

The second place of Jesus' mastery appears when we turn from the individual ideal to the social goal. No one will dream of saying to-day that the social life of our humankind in state and industry and other relations is a success. What Christianity sees is that the key to the future lies in the moral lordship of Jesus. That again may be easily misunderstood. A crude expression of it is a picture of a millennium with a returned and visible Christ ruling an autocratic state. What we mean is much deeper, much more searching. We mean that the goal of humanity is to be a life in which the spirit of Jesus is to have sway. If he stands for the ways of reason and justice and

goodwill, then there must be an end of militarism with its reliance upon force. If he stands for brotherhood, then we must find a way of transcending the walls which nationalistic selfishness and race fear and prejudice have erected, and of securing a united world. If he stands for coöperation and the life of service, then we must seek an industrial order in which the method of warfare and the motive of individual profit will be displaced from their present preëminence. We call this the kingdom of God, but when we want to give real meaning to the phrase, it becomes, as it was with Paul for example, the rule of the spirit of Christ. And this rule of the Christ spirit is not simply our dream for the future: it is the commanding authority for the present social life, more and more recognized by Christian conscience.

But what has been said about this rule of the Christ spirit implies another important fact: the moral lordship of Jesus does not rest simply upon what he said, but even more upon what he was. It is beside the mark to talk about the inadequacy of Jesus' social teachings as a guide for our modern life. Jesus did not lay down rules concerning industry and property and the state: he did what was more important, he showed men the way of the spirit. And this spirit was first of all in his own way of life. The moral lordship of Jesus cannot be discussed without considering the moral character and achievement of Jesus. It is strange how little attention has been paid to this by the theology of the Church as compared with its discussion of substance and natures about which its

knowledge has been so much less. Yet this is of the most vital interest to the Christian man.

Look at the facts first. It is not just the sinlessness of Jesus that we are considering. To that Christian faith has held, but that of itself is negative. And sometimes it has been joined to an idea of Jesus' life that made it less than human, as though back of the appearance of a man there dwelt some divine being who felt no real temptation, who lived without real growth or conflict and could not really do wrong. The full moral mastery of Jesus is not kept if we yield to any such heresy, however orthodox some people may suppose it. We keep it only as we find in Jesus a true and full human life, a life which was a real achievement, a life that was made perfect under the conditions under which we must live. Let us be grateful here that the stubborn facts of the Gospels have saved us from an error so fatal to our deeper needs.

We find in Jesus a life that has known temptation and conquered it. We find in him a life that grew through the years to its full attainment. But when we seek to describe that character, our words are too weak and our discernment too slight. He lived the perfect life with God. His was an utter devotion to the will of his Father; it was not a burden, an exaction, it was his joy and his strength. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He had an absolute confidence in God. No one saw more clearly than he the power of evil, or shrank from it more, and the story of Gethsemane tells the tale of his struggle when he faced its full meaning at last. Yet so clear

for him was the power of God, so utterly sure was he of God's perfect goodness that his life moves on before us as one not only of trust but of radiant joy and peace. He lived a life of simple humility and dependence upon God. All that he had came from God; it was the Spirit of God that spoke through him, it was by the finger of God that he cast out demons. "I can of myself do nothing." His praying is an expression of this dependence, and in this dependence is rooted his independence over against all else.

In his relation to others he lived what he taught and was himself more than all his teaching. He had a genius for friendship; he was human, accessible, loving. He had a spirit of utter goodwill for all men, and no lack of desert, no indifference or ingratitude, no answering hatred even, could overcome it. He gave the word "love" a new meaning by his life. He brought his own life wholly under the ideal of service. And yet all this was at the farthest remove from sentimentality or weakness. There was a certain sternness and inflexibility in him. Because he loved men he could not be satisfied with less than the highest for them. He had a passion for justice and a hatred of all sin and impurity.

Most wonderful is the completeness of his life. It is not mere sinlessness that makes him an ideal for men; it is the remarkable fact that in his character men of all times, of every race and station and condition, have found that which has inspired and commanded them. "Nowhere is such humility, such utter dependence upon God; nowhere such courage and in-

dependence over against men. In him we see the tenderness of a woman; but joined to it is a virility, a masterfulness which too often has been overlooked by theology and art alike. The Gospel pages show his love for children, his patience with all the weak; they show as well the flaming passion of a great and militant soul. He abounded with love and pity; and yet how stern he was with himself. In simple wholesome spirit he enters into all the joys of men; yet side by side in perfect unity we see the nights of prayer and the life of perfect fellowship with God." [5]

How shall we interpret this moral and spiritual mastery of Jesus? It is an interesting fact that in the past men have sought the grounds for calling Jesus divine first of all in the physical, the external, in miracles of virgin birth and bodily resurrection, and in miracles wrought by him. We are coming to see that the divine meaning of Christ must be sought first of all in his life, in his own moral and spiritual being. Of this life we must say two things. First it was genuinely human, not something settled in advance. He learned, he grew, he prayed, he fought temptation. It was not a sham humanity whose course was absolutely determined by something that came into the world with him. On the other hand we must say that this life was the deed of God, the gift of God, the absolute manifestation of God. Here was one human life that was wholly open to God, that had no will but God's will, no desire but God. For that reason it was possible for this life to be filled and pos-

[5] From the author's "A Working Faith," page 133.

sessed and constituted by the divine. So much, without any further theory, seems demanded by the Gospel accounts.

If this be true, then this is the first place where Christianity as the absolute religion expresses itself, then we have here the absolute ideal of life and will of God for men. Is it not time that the Church itself appreciated this more? Here in fact is the crucial test for Christianity just now. The most dangerous paganism to-day is that which is right in our midst, which is willing to do homage to the Church and to repeat the words of our creeds, but which will not recognize the right of the spirit of Christ as the only rule for business and state and every other part of human life. Impossible idealism, foolish sentimentalism, religion mixing up in politics: such are the words of men who tell us that business is business, that we live in a practical age, and that we must take men as they are. But if Christianity be the absolute religion, then here we must stand because we cannot do otherwise, and we must declare as against paganism, with its gods of force and selfishness and cunning, that the eternal God himself speaks to us in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and that there is no other way by which men and nations may be saved.

From the moral lordship of Jesus we thus pass to our second consideration of his meaning, and that is in the sphere of salvation. The idea of salvation is not limited to the Christian religion. It is, in fact, the common concern of all religions. The first thing that man wants from his religion is help, deliverance

from the ills that weigh upon him, and the promise of the good for which he longs. It is an interesting fact that the word "Savior" is applied to Jesus but very little in the New Testament, and even the word "salvation" is used very sparingly in the older books. But that does not alter the fact that this was the supreme interest of the early Christians. This was the heart of their hope, "that it was he who should redeem Israel."

The Church has often narrowed the idea of salvation and lost its larger meanings. Sometimes it has seemed to denote no more than some arrangement connected with the death of Jesus by which it became possible for God to forgive sins. We are coming again to see its larger meaning. For it should not be made to stand for anything less than humanity's deliverance from all its ills and the gift to humanity of all its life. Salvation, in other words, involves that to which we are saved as well as that from which we are saved, and it must be as broad as life itself, life individual and social, in this world and in that to come.

What then is the meaning of Jesus for this supreme concern of man? The offers of salvation have been as numerous as have been the religions and philosophies of life. The mystery religions of the early Christian centuries, the great rivals of Christianity, were preeminently religions of redemption. We see about us to-day innumerable modern cults, social, philosophical, psychological, mystical, each making its appeal to the same interest. What does Jesus stand for here? How does he bring life and help to men? Our answer to

this to-day must be more social and more psychological than it has been in the past. It must include, not simply individual experience but the social life and needs as well, and it must be set forth in terms of the actual moral, religious experience of men.

The Christian solution is marked first of all by its diagnosis of the evil from which men are to be delivered. There are, of course, weakness and suffering and poverty and ignorance and human folly; but the supreme problem is that of sin. Sin, Christianity teaches, is selfishness and selfishness is disruption for the social group and death for the individual in all higher life. Sin, it declares, is the fundamental disloyalty, man's "No" to the highest which he sees, no to conscience, to his highest self, to God. Its necessary result is isolation from one's fellows, from the forces of good, from God. This Jesus saw, but he saw too that the deliverance of man must come through a new attitude, a new spirit, and a renewed relation with God.

What then, in terms of actual experience of help, has Jesus done for men in all these years? He has shown men what sin really is and what life may be, waking a hatred for sin, stirring the desire for this life. He has shown men God, the God of righteousness and holiness, the God of mercy and infinite goodwill; and to those who have known him he has made this God near and real. And then he has led men into living fellowship with that God, a fellowship which has become the transforming power of life. We know how many things stand in the way of such a fellow-

ship with the Eternal which is the heart of religion. To some men God seems so far off and so unreal. For some he means the hard renunciation of the old way of self-will and lower interests. And some who know their sin and have caught the vision of the good and of God, are simply wakened to the realization of how the evil of their impotent lives separates them from such a God. But the Jesus who gives the vision and kindles the desire has met this last problem as well, and in his own way. He has not minimized men's sin nor abated from the vision of the high God, but he has given men the courage to believe in a God of mercy who seeks men in their sins, a God who in forgiveness receives men as his children in order that in this new fellowship they may have the power indeed to become his children. And thus he has met the final problem of life, the problem of moral and spiritual dynamic.

The social meaning of the doctrine of salvation has been too much neglected in the past or else misunderstood. This that we call the social gospel, however, is not new, nor is it a separate kind of Gospel. Social salvation is like any salvation; it simply means that we have come to realize more clearly that human life is something more than individual experience and conduct, and that Christianity can aim at nothing less than the redemption of all life. The meaning of Christianity for this life we have already considered in part in our study of the democracy of God. Here it remains to point out that we are dealing not simply with ethics, nor yet with a social transformation that

will take place automatically as individuals one by one become good. Rather we are dealing with a real social salvation. The way of Christ for men in their social life is the same as for their more individual problems. We must learn to see our sin in this our associated life and to hate it, our wars and intrigues and oppressions, our public corruption and our civic indifference, our boast of high ideals and the actual poverty and ignorance and suffering of great masses even in the most favored lands. We must repent and seek forgiveness. We must as peoples devote ourselves in a new consecration to truth and justice and mercy and service—that is, to God. And we must seek a new heart without which we shall never reach the new day.

Such is the way of salvation for which Christ stands, the way that we find indicated by his words, his spirit, his life, his death, and what these have meant in the life of his followers. Here is the power that has been transforming men and women for these many centuries, the power upon which the world waits to-day. What does it mean? What else except what the early Church saw and Christian men ever since? When we look at all this we can only say, "This is the finger of God." What we have here is God working among men. Here is the will of God, this forgiveness is the mercy of God, this help can be nothing less than the power of God. So we confess with Paul, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The first and foremost significance of all this is for our meaning of God: this is what God is doing, this is what God is like.

There is a significant testimony to be found in the way in which men, some of them outside the Christian Church, are coming to see that the Christ spirit is the only way out of the terrible conditions that press upon us to-day. Here are the words of Professor Gilbert Murray, himself an agnostic in the common sense of the term: "The common man, after this surfeit of hatred, is wearying for a return to love; after this welter of bestial cruelty, is searching for some dawn of Divine mercy; after this horror of ill-doing and foulness unforgettable is crying out, each man in his loneliness, for the spirit that is called Christ." This is real faith. And we have the same confession when Sir Philip Gibbs makes his plea for the spirit of mercy and good will and declares, "Europe needs a new heart." These men are saying in effect that the need of men and the heart of the divine are found in the spirit of Christ.

And so we come to the third place in which we see the supremacy of Jesus, or, shall we say, his absolute meaning for us. Jesus is the master of the faith of men, he is the revelation of God. What would you ask of the sphinx, some one proposed to F. W. H. Myers, if you could be assured of an answer to a single question. "Is the universe friendly to me?" was the reply. That is what we all want to know. To believe in some kind of a God is not hard, to realize that the world has some sort of oneness, that there is a Power that moves in it all and this power is one. But is this a power like ourselves? Can we speak to it and will it hear? And does it care, is it friendly,

is it good? Can we say with Browning in his "Reverie":

> "From the first Power was—I knew.
> Life has made clear to me
> That, strive but for closer view,
> Love were as plain to see."

Now the supreme meaning of Christ for faith lies here; he has fixed for us our ideal of the character of God and he has given us the courage to believe in a God like this. For our study then of this central matter of the character of God we go to Jesus. Our creeds, as Hastings Rashdall has pointed out, set forth everything except the character of God, which is the real matter for us. What has Jesus to teach about the character of God?

The holiness of God is as truly a part of Jesus' thought as of that of the Old Testament. In its earliest connotation, as we have seen, holiness had reference not to moral character but to the sovereignty, the majesty of God as the exalted one. It came unfortunately to be connected too much with the idea of separation, of ceremonial cleanness, and with matters of ritual. That may be the reason why, outside of a single passage in John, there is no word of Jesus which associates the term "holy" with God. But even in the Old Testament holiness had come to have a moral meaning; the prophet saw that it was in moral character, in righteousness and mercy, that the majesty and elevation of God were most plainly to be found. "My thoughts are not your thoughts," he declares. I will show mercy, not vengeance; "for I am God and not

man; the Holy One in the midst of thee."[6] And Jesus held the idea of holiness, though he did not use the word. For Jesus God was holy in both senses. God is utter and perfect goodness. God is also majesty and power, and men are to worship in awe and to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." The message of the mercy of God has its deepest meaning because it is this God that is lifted up who thus draws near to men.

The thought of the righteousness of God, so significant with the prophets, is also present with Jesus. With him, as with them, it is not the idea of a God measuring out to men reward or punishment as they deserve; that is our legalistic degradation of the term. The prophet saw righteousness and redemption as one. Jehovah was "a just God and a Savior." It meant one and the same thing when he said, "I will bring near my righteousness, and my salvation will not tarry."[7] Jesus gave the deathblow to legalism, the religion of rights.[8] The Sermon on the Mount makes clear the difference in human life between righteousness and rights (*justitia* and *jus*). Righteousness, or justice, looks to that order of life in which all, least and greatest, will have the fairest and fullest chance which the thought and devotion of man can secure. A righteous God is one who seeks this for men and who asks this spirit of men. It is itself inseparable from mercy. It is not a hard practice, but a high passion devoted to this great goal. It is concerned

[6] Isaiah lv.; Hosea xi. 8, 9.
[7] Isaiah xlv. 21; xlvi. 13.
[8] Matthew xx. 1-15.

with the welfare of man. It is the spirit which made Jesus utter that extraordinary word, that it were better for a man to be drowned in the sea than to make even a little child to stumble. The God of Jesus, the righteous God, is one whose throne is moved when men are hard or cruel toward their fellow men.

But the heart of Jesus' conception of God is the thought of his love. Never had this been seized so clearly, never set forth with such beauty and power. This too was not new. The Old Testament has a deep sense of the mercy of God and speaks of God as Father. But love never became so central and so constitutive of the deepest nature of God as with Jesus. With him it is an overflowing goodness to which there is no limit. The least of God's creation shares in his loving thought, the flower whose brief beauty came from him, the unnoticed sparrow whose fall does not escape his eye. There is no line drawn here because of race, there is no limit from lack of desert. His love is like the sun that floods all the earth alike, going out to the evil as to the good. And yet it is not something impersonal and vague, like this enveloping light of day. It is an individual concern, it is like the love of a father for whom each boy, no matter how large the household circle, has his own place of affection and concern. But this goodness is not sentimentality; this love is moral in its quality and its power. It has no counterpart in the weak indulgence which parents often show their children. Its concern is not to give us ease and spare us pain, but to secure for us the highest life at whatever cost. It offers men the incal-

culable gift of fellowship with God; but the gift, though free, is most exacting in what it demands in return. It is a case of "the utmost for the highest," man's surrender of his highest thought, his deepest purpose, his central affection. And it is a love which costs God as well as man, if the cross of Christ be, as we hold, the very deed of God. The love of God is one that sorrows for men, and suffers with them and for them, and goes out to seek them. Such a love is reconciling, redemptive. And such a fellowship is the highest creative moral power that we know. With such a vision of God one can easily see how fear and distrust on the one hand and the failure of utter devotion on the other were the deepest of sins of men in the thought of Jesus.

In all this we must recall again the fact that it is not simply with Jesus' teaching about the character of God that we are concerned. It was out of his own life that this vision grew, and it was the spirit of that life that weighed with men even more than his words. The faith of the Church is here summed up when we say that we believe in a Christlike God. We know what the Father is when we look upon the Son.

The limits of time as well as of the theme of these addresses rule out the consideration of the question of the person of Christ and of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We are concerned with the meaning of God as he comes to men in Jesus Christ. It is well, however, to remind ourselves again and again, especially in times of controversy, that the vital elements of Christian faith lie here in the realm of re-

ligious experience and moral conduct. We have asked three great questions concerning God, the greatest questions that the mind of man can propose: What is God like in his character, in his attitude toward men? What is the will of God for man, the ideal of individual life and the goal of our humanity? What help may we have from God? In the answer to these questions the place of Jesus is secure, and is absolute. This was the faith of men before they discussed matters of substance and essence and person. This is the faith that theology will emphasize more in the future. So conservative a theologian as Dr. James Denney held this in his later writings: "It is of no use to revert to the decision of Nicæa and Chalcedon in the present distress. . . . Christology in future will not find expression in terms like 'substance, hypostasis, and persona.' It may humble itself and acquiesce in agnosticism as far as the questions are concerned which these terms were employed to answer; but on the twofold ground that we owe to Jesus our knowledge of the Father and that the kingdom of God for which we hope is a kingdom which comes as his ascendency in human life is realized, it will assert for Jesus a place which is all his own in Christian faith—a faith in virtue of which he determines once for all both the believer's relation to God and his relation to his fellow men." [9] The discussion of the person of Christ will inevitably go on, but we have lost something of the confidence that our theories represent the absolute truth, and something of the dogmatism that once

[9] *The Constructive Quarterly*, June, 1914.

sought to enforce uniformity here. We have learned a little more truly where religion itself really lies, and where Christian unity is to be sought. The formal creeds have their value, but it is plain historical fact that no one set of definitions has ever commanded universal assent in the Church. And it is equally true that through the divisions and disputes of the ages there has remained the unity of those who found in Jesus Christ the God whom they could trust, the ideal that could command their conscience, the saving help by which they lived.

Note. The quotation from Dr. James Denney, given on page 98, should be stated in full: "I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour" (p. 350, "Jesus and the Gospel"). Dr. Denney's Conclusion (pp. 329-361) deserves careful reading. No one has stated more clearly or strongly than this conservative theologian the central and absolute place of Jesus for historic Christianity, for its conception of God and life and for its experience of the saving help of God. But Dr. Denney saw, as many conservatives of our day do not see, the difference between the place of Christ in faith and the theological interpretations. "It is this distinction," he declares, "between soundness in faith—a genuinely Christian attitude of the soul to Christ, in virtue of which Christ determines the spiritual life throughout—and soundness in doctrine—the acceptance of some established intellectual construction of faith, on which emphasis needs to be laid" (page 340).

VI

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

"PERHAPS the oldest and most persistent of all our religious ideas," says Prof. E. F. Scott, "is that of the Spirit." [1] The idea itself is by no means limited to the Christian religion. It appears in Zoroastrianism and is even more significant in later Stoicism. The mystery religions also deal with the idea of a divine presence or power coming to the initiate through their rites. But quite beyond the instances where the idea seems more definitely expressed, there is the conception common to both primitive and advanced religions of the divine as a power that moves in human life. The New Testament bears witness to the central place which this idea occupied in the early Church. Jesus is represented as being filled and empowered by the Spirit, especially at the beginning of his work. Pentecost appears as the birthday of the Christian communion. Not only are the leaders fitted for their tasks by the gift of the Spirit, but the Church as a whole is the dwelling place of the Spirit and every disciple as disciple shares in this gift. No one can read these pages sympathetically without feeling the deep and

[1] "The Spirit in the New Testament," page 11.

joyous sense that these early Christians had that God dwelt in their midst and that they were indeed living in the presence and by the power of the Eternal.

In view of all this the neglect of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Church is surprising. Compared with other great doctrines, the thinkers of the Church have given it little attention. In the earlier centuries when the ecumenical creeds were being shaped, and the doctrine of God was the central question, thought was centered almost wholly on the person of Christ and the Trinity. Later generations have not given it greater consideration. The attitude of the great body of Christian believers has corresponded to this, and in the minds of most of them the term calls forth only the vaguest of ideas as compared with their thought of God as Father or of the historic Jesus.

There are definite reasons for this and of various kinds. First is the lack of clear and adequate conceptions. The idea of the Spirit is one that roots back in primitive religious life and thought, beginning with animism and spiritism, and at no point has spiritual and ethical thinking taken longer to do its work. Older ideas lingered on. We see the process of change in the Old Testament, and there are survivals of the earlier ideas in the New. The Spirit has been too much conceived in terms of force, rather than as ethical and truly spiritual. It has been limited too much to the unusual, and its meaning for normal Christian life and experience has not been appreciated.

A second reason is that this doctrine, usually in some inadequate form, has been especially exploited

by groups that have been more distinguished by enthusiasm than by sound judgment or even, in many cases, by solid moral qualities. The early Church shows us the conflict of bishop and prophet, where the bishop appealed to tradition and stood for order, while the prophet with equal force stood for the conviction of the early Church that truth and guidance came from the Spirit of God who dwelt in the Church and spoke through whom it chose without special reference to elections and appointments. But authority and order won out, and the emphasis on the doctrine of the Spirit remained with groups and sects that were inclined to be the more extreme because of the attitude of the general Church toward them. Montanism represents the type, and later history shows corresponding groups from the Anabaptists down to the Holy Rollers of our day.

The third is the influence of ecclesiasticism here. The Church, of course, did not give up the doctrine of the Spirit, but the work of the Spirit was defined and confined until it came under the control of the institution and became perfectly safe. In the Roman Catholic Church the Spirit spoke infallibly through Scripture and tradition and general council and, finally, through the *ex cathedra* utterance of the pope. The Protestant Church tended more and more to make the Scriptures such an infallible expression, culminating in a doctrine of verbal infallibility that was as dangerous to the free religion of the spirit as Catholicism. In many cases, moreover, its attitude

toward its creeds put them practically in the same class of inspired and infallible organs.[2]

But however imperfect the thinking, and however much the abuse of the doctrine in practice, this idea of the indwelling Spirit has persisted in the Church and is rightly receiving new interest and new attention to-day. The reasons for this are plain. Historically there is, first of all, the place which this idea has in the New Testament. There is, secondly, the persistent religious experience of men who have found a life and strength that came not of themselves, a power that fitted them for their tasks, a spirit of love that changed their attitude toward others, a peace and joy that filled their hearts. The meaning of this for our concept of religion comes next. For it is here that Christianity finds the union of the religious and the ethical which we demand, in a Spirit that is God's gift to dependent man, while at the same time it is

[2] Note the quotation from J. G. Machen in Richards, "Christian Ways of Salvation," page 219. Professor Machen denies that the Westminster Confession is a denominational affair or "merely one expression of the progressive Christian consciousness. It is rather a final and absolute statement of Christian truth ultimately to be accepted by the whole world." Consider also what was implied in the action of the Methodist Episcopal Church in seeking to place its Articles of Religion beyond possibility of any revision or amendment. Viewed from one side, this would seem to imply a pretty wide assumption of absolute inspiration on the part of the General Conference which took such action and which undertook to determine thus what must be believed for all future time by the Church. On the other hand, it apparently denies the conviction of the presence and continued guidance of the Spirit in the Church which has had so much emphasis in Methodism.

essentially man's own spirit, his own life possessed and expressed in freedom and responsibility. Finally, the idea of the indwelling Spirit is essential to the Christian thought of God and to those elements which are gaining increasing significance for us: the God who dwells with men and moves in all the world's life, the God of love whose very nature it is to give himself, the God of moral personality who is like men and with whom it is therefore possible for man to have communion, that is, the sharing of life. To this study we are further impelled because the negligence of the Church has furthered the growth of such movements as Christain Science, New Thought, and Theosophy, which appeal to men at this point, as the old mystery religions did, by professing to relate men to the divine realities and to enable them to share in their powers.

If we turn now to the Bible to note the idea of the Spirit there contained, we shall find two constant elements. First, the work of the Spirit is always thought of in relation to man, not in connection with the operation of God in nature. Secondly, the Spirit is thought of in terms of power, a power from God coming into human life. Beyond these simple elements, however, there is wide diversity in conception. Nor is it simply that the earlier ideas are more crude and the later more developed. We find rather the divergence of two broadly distinguished tendencies, which rest back naturally upon the difference in the way in which God is conceived in his nature and his relation to his world. One of these conceptions may be called the primitive, though its influence persists to our day.

Turning to this more primitive conception first, we find its distinguishing mark in its thought of God as power or essence alien in nature to man. When the Spirit of God comes upon a man, it is as a strange and alien power that it seizes hold of him. There is nothing necessarily moral in its nature. In Samson, for example, we find it in a man of anything but ideal character, and what it does for him apparently is simply to contribute superhuman physical strength. The spirit of his exploits is about as remote from what Paul identifies as the fruit of the Spirit as well could be. Sometimes the Spirit produces a state of ecstasy or frenzy. The man's own spirit goes out as the Spirit of Jehovah comes in; in a somewhat literal way he is thought of as beside himself or, as the Germans phrase it, outside himself. Something like this seems to be illustrated in the incident of "Saul among the prophets." [3] The great prophets stand over against all this. It was probably because of this situation that Hosea declared: "The prophet is a fool; the man that hath the spirit is mad." [4] And this may explain why Jeremiah, the most spiritual of the prophets, deeply conscious that Jehovah is speaking through him, yet makes no reference to the Spirit, and why Amos flatly protests that he is not a prophet nor a member of any prophet school. In all this the work of the Spirit is seen in the unusual and abnormal, is thought of in terms of an alien power, and is associated commonly with a high emotional state.

[3] 1 Samuel xix. 18-24.
[4] Hosea ix. 7.

This conception of the Spirit, which is not distinctly Christian but has most likeness to what is found in other religions, lingers in early Christianity and recurs in later times. We see it represented in the speaking with tongues. If we take Paul's discussion in his letter to the Corinthians as our guide, and this of course is a first-hand testimony, then the speaking with tongues appears to have been an unintelligible utterance under high emotional strain, and this ecstatic state the Corinthians viewed as a peculiarly notable work of the Spirit greatly to be coveted. Here again is the stress on emotion and the idea of a power that comes in as alien to a man and takes him out of himself. The same conception appears in a widespread idea of inspiration. The earliest illustration of this we have in Philo, but his theory reappears very soon in Christian writers. "A prophet," says Philo, "utters nothing of his own, but the foreign message of another who speaks through him." "His own intelligence departs at the arrival of the Divine Spirit, and returns with its departure, for it is not lawful for the mortal to dwell with the immortal." Nor is the prophet, according to Philo, able to understand what he utters.[5] Here again the Spirit is thought of as an external

[5] See Rees, "The Holy Spirit," pages 50, 51. Compare Plato, cited by E. F. Scott, "The Spirit in the New Testament," page 166. "God takes away the minds of the poets and uses them as his ministers, and he also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know that they speak not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God is the speaker, and that through them he is conversing with us."

power, of a nature essentially alien to man, and with a method of control more or less mechanical and compulsive. Along this line move all the theories of verbal inspiration. The essential kinship between God and man is denied. The Spirit does not come in to change and renew the spirit of a man in thought, in discernment, in love and truth, so that seeing he may speak. The action of the Spirit has no necessary relation to a man's moral character; it is simply a force controlling, communicating words, restraining from error, and the picture of the writer as the passive pen in the hand of God is used again and again.[6]

It is here that a modernist like Kirsopp Lake steps in with the suggestion that this whole conception of the Holy Spirit be given up. "Does the experience of controlling force which the prophet feels really come from some external influence, or is it merely his consciousness of ordinarily unknown depths in his own nature? It is obvious that a theory of prophecy could be made on lines rendered familiar by psychologists, by suggesting that what happens in a prophetic experience is the sudden 'coming up' of what is ordinarily 'subliminal.' It is, however, important to remember that this is merely a modern hypothesis just as the Jewish view of inspiration was an ancient one. But it is impossible in a rational theology to combine fragments of two wholly different explanations of life

[6] Hodge, "Systematic Theology," I. 155: "Inspiration in itself has no sanctifying influence." See R. A. Torrey, "What the Bible Teaches," pages 282, 283, for a recent statement insisting upon inspiration as the communication of infallible words.

and of the universe. 'The Spirit' was an admirably intelligent phrase in the Jewish or early Christian view of the universe; it does not fit in well with the modern view of the universe. Similarly the theory of subliminal action fits very well into the modern view, but not into that of traditional theology." [7]

The issue here, however, is a much larger one than that contained in the question as to what happens to the prophet, and the alternative even in the prophet's case is not that of traditional theology versus the subliminal consciousness. We are dealing here with the question that underlies our whole discussion: Can the divine enter into the human? How is God related to man? Leaving particular theories aside, there is involved here the fundamental Christian conviction that God and man can have real fellowship, that God, creating, redeeming, transforming, giving of his own life, can and does thus enter into human life. That is what God means to us, the creative Power pouring forth its life in the shaping of his world. If he gives life thus on the lower plane, shall we draw the line when we come to life at the highest, and say that here in the rational, moral being of man God cannot give of that truth and love and righteousness which make the heart of his being? The criticism of Professor Lake obtains against a particular theory. It does not, however, reach the question whether there is such an intercourse between God and man in which God through his Spirit enters into man. It simply assumes that a psychological description is an ultimate

[7] "Landmarks of Early Christianity," pages 43, 44.

explanation. Nor does Professor Lake appreciate the presence in the Bible of another conception of the Spirit and its work which is of greater significance for us.

In the conception which we have just considered God is conceived as Being or Power above man and fundamentally different in nature. The Spirit is then thought of as a force that controls as it were from without, whose work is seen in extraordinary gifts or experiences. The conception to which we now turn emphasizes the nature of God as personal and especially his moral character. Religion then becomes more and more a personal relation morally conditioned. To this the idea of the Spirit naturally corresponds.

We begin with the prophets. What the prophets did for the idea of the Spirit was not so much through what they said about the Spirit of Jehovah, as through their thought of God. Their idea of the righteousness of God was not wholly new, but they brought out its meaning and made it determinative. God was not first of all an overlord to be pleased with offerings, nor a strange power and majesty to be approached with correct ritual prescription. God was righteousness. Religion became essentially a personal relation marked by reverence and righteousness in the worshiper, and the service of God was to be found in a life of justice and mercy shown to fellow men. God was not a mysterious and alien power whose Spirit laid hold of the prophet and wrought ecstatic experiences. Rather he was known in his historical dealings with his people. Where the idea of inspiration was not denounced as

with Hosea, or passed by as with Jeremiah and the seventh-century prophets, it became as with Micah moral insight and moral passion: "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." [8] Such a conception of God and of religion turned the thought more and more to the moral and spiritual as the sphere of God's action in man. The Spirit is to come to the messianic king and to the people of the new age as the spirit of a new life. The Spirit will mean wisdom and understanding and counsel and might and knowledge and the fear of Jehovah.[9] Poured out upon the people, the Spirit will bring justice and righteousness and peace and confidence.[10] Jeremiah does not refer to the Spirit, yet contributes the supreme Old Testament declaration concerning spiritual religion.[11] Ezekiel still has place for trance and ecstasy and vision in the prophet's life, but he also makes clear this inner and moral work of the Spirit: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you." [12]

It is to Paul, however, that the Church owes what is most distinctive in its doctrine of the Spirit. The prevalent Christian thought as he met it still saw the work of the Spirit in that which was unusual, extraordinary, and striking, and conceived of the Spirit as

[8] Micah iii. 8.
[9] Isaiah xi. 2.
[10] Isaiah xxxii. 15-17.
[11] Jeremiah xxxi. 31-35.
[12] Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27.

a power coming from without and laying hold of a man. Such works and gifts as this still have their place with Paul, but his emphasis is distinctly upon the ethical. That appears above all from the way in which he relates Christ and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not some strange force; it is the Christ spirit, the spirit of love and truth and holiness which was seen in Jesus. We recall the extraordinary way in which Paul uses interchangeably Spirit, Holy Spirit, God, Christ, spirit of Christ, when he speaks of the divine presence dwelling in man. However he may conceive the relation of the Spirit and Christ, this much at least is clear: first, the Holy Spirit is for him ethical through and through and that in terms of the character of Jesus; "the Lord is the Spirit" was one of Paul's epoch-making words.[13] Second, Paul sees the work of the Spirit in the whole range of Christian experience; all love and truth and grace, all spiritual insight and moral power, flow from this.[14] Third, while the early Church emphasized quite in the traditional Jewish manner the extraordinary as the special work of the Spirit, Paul saw its supreme work in the ordinary and normal Christian life. He did this "on the basis of his experience, which showed him that the Christian himself was the greatest miracle." [15] His chapter on love, coming in the midst of his discussion of the gifts of the Spirit, is eloquent witness to his doctrine. Fourth, the Spirit is for Paul the

[13] 2 Corinthians iii. 17.
[14] Galatians v. 16-25; Romans viii. 4-6.
[15] Gunkel, "*Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes*," pages 80, 81.

Spirit of God. Whatever Paul's teaching may mean for trinitarian doctrine, the Spirit is not some intermediate being or some power put forth by God, but is God himself dwelling in men. Finally, though the Spirit is thus a supernatural gift, yet it is part of his own conscious life; the love, the truth, the purity are man's own spirit, his thought and will and emotion. The religious and the ethical are here united. The life is wholly the gift of God, the work of the Spirit; and yet it is wholly a life of faith, that is, of man's trust and obedience. It is true there are other elements in Paul's conception, not merely in his recognition of such gifts as tongues, but possibly even in his conception of the sacraments. What has been pointed out is simply those elements in which the higher and the distinctively Christian teaching appear.

One conclusion has become plain from this discussion. The doctrine of the Spirit cannot be settled by discussing it as a theologumenon by itself—and what doctrine can? In a specially intimate manner it depends upon our thought of God and of the relation between God and man, that is, of religion. Paul is in the line of the prophets and Jesus. God is not thought of first of all in terms of power, strange and distant, or of the sovereign ruler. Religion is not an institution to which men submit, whether of law or creed or ecclesiastical rule, nor is it the incursion of some alien force into human life. God is personal and rational and perfectly good. He is like us or, to put it the other way, we are made in his likeness. Religion is a personal relation, a fellowship which demands

above all else moral likeness. The supreme declaration about God is that he is Christ-like. The supreme revelation of religion is that given us in the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, in the life that he lived as Son with his Father, as man with his brother men. It is on this basis that we must understand what the Spirit of God is and how the Spirit is given to men.

We may summarize then this second conception of the nature of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of God, not something apart from God sent by him to man. The Spirit is our term for God conceived as giving himself to man and dwelling in man. The Spirit is personal and ethical as God is personal and ethical, and in the measure in which the Spirit is shared by man he shares in this higher being of God. As God is Christlike, so the character of the Spirit is Christlike, and the final test of its presence in a man is Christlikeness of spirit.

The higher conception of the Spirit here suggested did not maintain itself in purity in the history of the Church. Two other points of view in particular were influential. The first is the idea already considered, deriving from primitive religion and coming to early Christianity through Jewish thought. The Spirit is here conceived in terms of power, not a moral-personal power acting from within but a compulsive power moving from without. Thus we have the modern instances of speaking with tongues, and the ecstasies and trances and jerks and similar phenomena that have appeared with certain kinds of camp meetings and revivals and types of mystical experience. The same

idea of the Spirit as "power" lies back of certain conceptions of sanctification and of the "higher life." The symbols of fire and water as suggesting the Spirit and its action have their justification, but their use by certain groups suggests that men forget that these are only symbols, while they press the literal picture until they have a process conceived as really mechanical. Here again the Spirit becomes an external force working in mechanical and not in moral-spiritual fashion. Or take a scene in which, with a maximum of noise and emotion and a minimum of thought and moral purpose, men call for the "power" to come down, and find the answer to their prayer in some ecstatic experience. This too is the primitive idea of the Spirit. This conception has had special place in the "enthusiastic" sects and groups from Montanism down to the Holy Rollers. We must not overlook the fact, however, that they represented a justified protest against the effects of ecclesiasticism and institutionalism on personal religion. Rightly they asserted that religion was a living experience of God in the conscious life of men, that each soul might receive in the Spirit of God a life and power higher than himself, and that for this he might go to God himself.

The other conception of the Spirit has a philosophic source, coming into the Church principally through Greek thought and religion. God is conceived here in terms of substance or essence rather than of power. Humanity belongs to the order of that which is sinful, perishable, mortal. God is infinite, spiritual, incorruptible. Salvation is the transformation of corrup-

tible being into the incorruptible, of the mortal into immortality, of the human into the divine. Here is the basis for the whole ecclesiastical-sacramentarian conception of salvation. Consistently with this idea of God, the Spirit given to man is conceived more as a divine substance transforming our humanity. This divine substance is infused through the sacraments. As a Roman Catholic authority says, "It is understood to be 'subjected' (to inhere) in the essence of the soul; it is more commonly regarded as a 'physical' entity, not a moral participation in the Divine nature." [16]

These last considerations have brought us to the heart of our study: how does the Spirit of God come to men and work in men? The Christian doctrine of the Spirit involves always a two-fold conviction: first, that all our spiritual life is the gift and deed of God, all truth and love and goodness that we may possess; second, that this gift is not something which we hold apart from God, but rather that this is the very life of God himself, his presence in us. It becomes then a question of supreme importance, How does man share this life of God? Around this question moves the whole doctrine of salvation when rightly conceived, and the Christian idea of grace is but another way of stating the same matter.

Here again it is the idea of God that men have that is determinative, and this must first be illustrated by a consideration of traditional doctrines of the way in

[16] "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," article "Grace," VI. 368.

which men are assumed to receive the Spirit, or divine grace. When God is conceived primarily as sovereign Power, as in the Augustinian-Calvinistic tradition, then you have logically the idea of irresistible grace whose action is wholly dependent upon the will of God and does not necessarily work through the conscious and moral experience of the subject, who is indeed essentially passive and impotent. Back of sacramentarianism is likewise, as we have seen, an absolutistic conception of God except that now he is absolute essence, an order of being in sharp contrast with humanity. But again it is not personal-ethical experience that is needed; the divine is not primarily personal and ethical, and as substance it can be mediated through such impersonal media as the physical materials of the sacraments. In both cases, this idea of the absolute transcendence of God plays into the institutional idea of religion; the divine is not present in personal fellowship, but mainly in such divine agencies or ordainments as the Church and its sacraments, the inspired writing, and the authoritative creed. What may be called the ecstatic-emotional conception of the Spirit follows the same line. For it God is not the being akin to man with whom man may therefore have fellowship in the normal experiences of life; as the transcendent and mysterious Being his Spirit enters man with an inrush of emotion as something extraordinary if not abnormal.

The contrasted conception, as we have seen, is that which thinks of God first of all as personal and ethical. However dependent it may see man to be, however

imperfect or even sinful, yet it emphasizes the likeness of being in man and God at this essential point. With this goes an idea of religion plainly contrasted with the institutional conception suggested above or the relation of the mere dependent to his Sovereign. The heart of religion becomes a personal fellowship morally conditioned.

Such a fellowship permeates all of man's life and demands it all. Man is to love God with his mind, not vaguely to feel or blindly to submit, but to hear the God who says, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet; come now, and let us reason together." It is the religion not of servants, but of friends who know what their Lord doeth. It calls upon the will, not for blind obedience it is true, but for a devotion which goes far beyond what the mere servant can yield. The religion of fellowship demands that higher righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount, where man is one with God as his son in the inmost spirit of his life. It asks us to see the high purpose of God for ourselves and the world and to make that purpose the ruling motive of life. It is a fellowship that includes man's heart, his emotions. It calls for awe and reverence that is all the deeper because this most high God offers men the privilege of life with him. It involves love and trust, and thus the joy and peace which flow from these. It unites heart and will when it asks us to share the life of God in our attitude toward our fellow men, so that in the spirit of service and utter good will we may show ourselves children of our Father.

This is the religion to which God summons us, the

religion of personal fellowship realized in communion with him and in right relations with our fellow men. But this religion is not only our life, it is God's gift; it is in and through such personal fellowship that this God gives himself to men. That is the significant fact for our discussion of how the indwelling Spirit is received. The analogy of human friendship illustrates this most simply. This man is my friend. He has riches, he has position and influence; he has what is far more, the wisdom of years, the wealth of broad culture, the treasures of a great soul. The great treasures of life come from such friendship, and the greatest of these is the friend himself, his own wisdom and love and spirit as they enter into my spirit. And he gives himself to me through the practice of our friendship. So God gives himself, his Spirit, to become a new life in men. Was not this the message of Jesus? It is true he did not discuss it, but he set it forth in parable, in saying, above all in his own life. His picture of religion was just this picture of a life of fellowship which the children live with their Father. He made plain its demand of utter devotion, of inner likeness of spirit, of unwavering trust, of reverent fear. But he also made clear how God gave himself in this fellowship, how eagerly he desired his children thus to come to him, how freely he gave to them. There is more of the Christian doctrine of salvation here than one would surmise who had simply studied volumes on the atonement or discussions of the various kinds of grace.

Let us look more closely now at this personal fellow-

ship as the channel through which God gives his Spirit to men. The significance of the sacraments of the Church is not, of course, denied here. They have their value in quickening devotion, in aiding our sense of the invisible, in uplifting us through acts of common worship, and so in furthering communion with the highest and making access for God to man. But that God has limited himself in special manner to these ways, or that the material or visible in itself may become the channel for a necessary operation of grace, this falls below the plane of personal and spiritual religion. Nor is there a denial here of the value and need of the emotional. The error lies in supposing that the apprehension of the mind and the attitude of the will are of minor importance, or in supposing that the occasional intense emotional experience is the one door by which the Spirit comes in. The fault of traditional thought, on the whole, has been rather in what it has excluded than in what it has emphasized in considering how God shares his Spirit with men. The whole idea of grace and the means of grace needs greatly to be broadened and especially to be ethicized and humanized. The following paragraphs point out three of the doors by which the Spirit of such a God as ours enters into human life; in their brevity they are intended simply to be suggestive.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth and as such works through the truth. There is no access to the human soul, not even for God himself, except through the truth. That does not mean that correct knowledge and spiritual experience are one, nor that the Spirit

of God is excluded by imperfect understanding. The God of faith is not so much a theological doctrine as a practical demand; he comes as love and righteousness asking obedience. The first summons that comes to primitive man asking him to give himself for something that is higher than himself involves some apprehension of the divine whether he gives to it the name of God or not. And history shows how, amidst all the divisions and isms, men have come into living fellowship with God and showed by their lives the presence of his Spirit. Yet in every case there is a truth, an ideal, to which men surrender, a light which they follow. The larger truth, then, though it does not necessitate, yet makes possible the larger entrance of God. As a matter of fact the great periods of forward movement or of religious quickening in the Church have been connected with some new or renewed apprehension of truth. One needs but think of such names as Paul and Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, and John Wesley.[17] Here is the significance of that relation between Jesus and the Spirit which is revealed in the New Testament. The early Church was deeply conscious that it was through Jesus that its new experience of the Spirit had come, and we have seen the close relation in Paul's thought. In Jesus there had come a new and vivid apprehension of God and his purpose and of the meaning of life; that truth was an open door by which could enter a new experience of God's presence. Here is enforced also the value

[17] See "The Next Revival of Religion," in "Living Issues in Religious Thought," by H. G. Wood.

of meditation. It may take but a moment to assent to a statement of fact or to grasp a theoretical proposition; but the truth involved in moral and spiritual ideals is made our own only as we meditate upon it and indeed live with it.

The Spirit of God is Holy Spirit and as such works through moral fellowship, through a right moral relation. In its original sense the word "holy" here no doubt meant transcendent, as it did elsewhere; it bore the thought that this Spirit was from above and not of man. That truth remains, but for our current use the adjective has a moral meaning; the Spirit is goodness, love, righteousness, or, as Paul put it, the Christ spirit. Such a Spirit can be received by man only in a life of moral obedience, a fellowship of will. We come here to the aspects of spiritual life which Jesus especially emphasized. Here is involved the devotion, or consecration, of life to God, the constant expression of that devotion in the varied affairs of life, the openness to truth, the aspiration toward good and God, the inner loyalty of spirit, and above all the active expression of the Divine Spirit in our relations with men. This Spirit of God man can receive only in moral loyalty and can possess only as he constantly lives it out.

We need to note also the significance of man's social life in relation to the Spirit of God. It is in the fellowship of man with man that fellowship with God is most deeply enjoyed; it is in and through the social group that God can most freely and fully give himself. The reason for this is not hard to find. It is simply

stating the religious meaning of the familiar fact that human personality is social and is achieved only in social relations. Here is God's way of making men; not in the isolation of the individual, but in the social group. Here lies the first meaning of the Church, but how commonly that meaning has been missed by the ecclesiast. It does not mean that the Spirit speaks only through the authority of the Church or works only through her controlled channels of grace. It is not the institution that counts here, but the fellowship, the *koinonia* which the New Testament sets forth. Here is a spirit of common faith and love and devotion and sense of God; the early Church felt that that spirit of the group was the Spirit of God. The Spirit was the real life of the Church, and the fellowship was the great way that God had of imparting his Spirit to the individual. But though this is first, we cannot stop here. All true fellowship is an open door for God's entrance and an expression of his presence. "Where love is, God is." The highest fellowship will, of course, be mutual and be that which is joined to the highest interests of life. But he who goes where human need is, he who takes to men a spirit of good will, a passion for righteousness, a devotion to service, he will receive of the Spirit of God as surely as does he who bows in worship with the great congregation. This is the message that underlies the poem, "The River of God," dedicated to Jane Addams and offering an interpretation of her life.[18]

[18] Frank Crane.

"'There is a river the streams whereof
Make glad the City of God.'
I went through death to find this thing
And all through heaven I trod.

"Now heaven's a wide and wonderful place,
But the people are much as we,
So I came back home in sorrow and thirst,
And there one said to me:

"'O fool, you have traveled far to find
What you've crossed over time and again;
For the River of God is in Halsted Street
And is running black with men.'

"'And low in the rushes the river sings,
And sweet is its spirit lure,
For it waters the joys of loving and living
That grow in the hearts of the poor.'

"So I took me a place in the City slums
Where the River runs night and day,
And there I sit 'neath the Tree of Life
And teach the children to play.

"And ever I soil my hands in the River,
But ever it cleans my soul,
As I draw from the deep with the Silver Cord,
And fill the Golden Bowl."

One point more needs to be made in connection with this conception of religion as fellowship, and of fellowship as the way by which God comes into human life. Does it not bring us nearer to a satisfactory answer to the question how the religious and the ethical may be joined together, how God and man may really meet? On the one hand is the demand on man's part for a religion of freedom and initiative; the life that we

want must be our life, our deed, our achievement. On the other hand is man's need and the great query whether indeed God can come into human life. You cannot answer that question by simply equating God and man, after the manner of pantheism; it does not meet our need to lump our poor humanity together and call it God. You cannot meet the problem by so setting man and God over against each other that a real union is impossible, or by so setting the God of might above man that man becomes creature and puppet. You can meet it if your God is supreme not simply as all-dominating power but as truth and holy love, lifting man up through the ages of increasing purpose to the level of personal life, and then giving himself to man in free and gracious personal fellowship. And so at our close, our highest conception takes us back to the words of Jesus: "When ye pray, say, Father."

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